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1843-1928.
John Chambers, servant of
Christ and master of hearts

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JOHN CHAMBERS

SERVANT OF CHRIST AND MASTER OF HEARTS

AND

HIS MINISTRY IN PHILADELPHIA



JOHN CHAMBERS.
About 1873.

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AND

HIS MINISTRY IN PHILADELPHIA

BY

REV. WM. ELLIOT GRIFFIS, D.D., L.H.D.

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THE HERMIT NATION", "THE PILGRIMS IN THEIR THREE
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JOHN CHAMBERS'S FAVORITE PSALM

PSALM CXXXIII

Behold how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity !

It is like the precious ointment upon the head,
That ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard :
That went down to the skirts of his garments :

As the dew of Hermon,
And as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion :
For there the Lord commanded the blessing,
Even life forevermore.

TO
ALL MY FELLOW ALUMNI
MEMBERS OF
THE FIRST INDEPENDENT CHURCH
OF PHILADELPHIA
WHO IN HALLOWED MEMORY OF THE PAST
OR
IN HOPE OF REUNION IN THE ETERNAL HOME
GREET
JOHN CHAMBERS AS THEIR FATHER IN GOD
I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK

.

PREFACE.

JOHN CHAMBERS was one of the first among popular preachers of the nineteenth century in Philadelphia, and the pastor for fifty years of one congregation.

Not alone to delight those with vivid memories, who knew loved and honored John Chambers, have I undertaken this work of filial piety, but to tell to young men of to-day the story of a consecrated, strenuous, and successful life, the secret of which was self-conquest and strength in God.

One great purpose and benefit of biography is lost if it does not clearly reveal the growth of character, and, in the case of a beautiful and successful life, a personality worthy of being held up as an example. It ought to show also self-conquest, ripening in wisdom, the philosophic mind that comes with years, and the maturing and sweetening influences of honored old age. It would be of little help to young men, struggling against their own besetting weaknesses to gain self-mastery and attainment to true Christian manhood, to picture only the John Chambers, as we knew him,—in the serene evening of life, when passions had cooled and reason reigned, and the gray light of Heaven's morning had settled on his head. I have tried to show in the typical Irishman, the creature of heredity and the passionate patriot, the aspiring Christian and the child of God, educated by unseen but potent influences, winning steadfast victory over sin and self, becoming king of men and master of hearts, leading a host to triumph along the pathway to Heaven, able to do all things through Christ his helper.

The wonderful character and personality of John Chambers were not sudden creations. They were growths. He himself believed that while justification was instant, sanc-

PREFACE

tification was gradual. He laughed at the man who professed never to have made mistakes. He had always patience with those who slipped and fell. He showed us how to neutralize the results of our missteps and gain new strength by painful and humiliating experiences.

I return my hearty thanks to one and all of the friends, fellow alumni of the old First Independent Church of Philadelphia, who have aided me with reminiscences, asking pardon for omissions and indulgence for possible errors.

W. E. G.

Ithaca, N. Y., July 20, 1903.

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CHAPTER I.

PHILADELPHIA. THE HISTORIC SITE.

Throngs of people daily pass along two of Philadelphia's most imposing highways. Broad Street spans the entire city from north to south. Chestnut Street is the Quaker City's most brilliant thoroughfare, stretching between the Delaware and the Schuylkill. Those who traverse either may see the great twenty story building wherein is made and published the *North American*, the oldest daily newspaper on the continent. Northward from Broad and Chestnut, rise the imposing municipal buildings, on the crest of whose mountain of stone and peak of metal is visible the bronze statue of William Penn, founder of the City of Brotherly Love. Though this son of a Dutch mother was the beginner of the City of Homes, yet there have been many other makers of Philadelphia.

Not least among those who have builded the unseen but nobler city, and who have stamped their names indelibly upon human hearts and lives, even unto the third and fourth generation of its citizens, is John Chambers. During forty-eight years he was pastor of the First Independent Church, whose second edifice stood from 1831 to 1899 on the site of the twenty-storied "sky-scraper" at Broad and Sansom streets.

Happily, in the eternal fitness of things, history and sentiment were not ignored in the uprearing of the mighty structure, whose cornice is not far from the clouds. In the two lower stories of the façade is a happy reminder of the old brown stone church of pillared front. Most felicitously does memory find here a sermon in stone and a stimulus in architecture. Indeed, a former worshipper walking on the

other side of the street, who chanced to look no higher than the old familiar altitudes, might imagine that the house of prayer, with its Ionic columns, still stood to bless its worshippers. Even of the same hue and tint as in childhood's days, eight columns of fluted brown sandstone renew in verisimilitude the old architecture. Thus the mighty edifice enshrines upon its front, in imperishable masonry, suggestions, at least, of former history.

To be exact, whereas there were in old times six round fluted Ionic columns, resting on high square bases, supporting a simple but imposing pediment, there are to-day eight front columns supporting an architrave, with two mightier upholding pillars within.

At first thought, men might be tempted to see in this colossal structure, whose roof is so much nearer the sky a symbol of "the power of the press," which is alleged to be more influential than the pulpit. One political gentleman whom I knew well—even he who in 1893, raised the stars and stripes over Hawaii—affirmed in my hearing, that "one newspaper was equal to three pulpits". Yes, but that depends on which newspaper and which pulpit. It is certain that in the eyes of some, printing machinery and type, and daily square miles of inked paper, for which whole forests have been destroyed, have more moral potency than worship, prayer, and preaching. Yet against this modern parable of the mustard seed become a tree, phenomenal and imposing, we have happily also the Master's parable of the leaven, or of might unseen, of a kingdom coming "without observation". "Things seen", even when dazzling are not really as potent as those which transform the life. It could add little or nothing to the reputation of John Chambers, to put on paper with ink his words that kindled our souls. Yet, "did not our hearts burn within us" when we heard? Can

THE HISTORIC SITE

we forget them? Was not his a life unto life? "He being dead yet speaketh."

So then, whether standing in the shadow of the great edifice—typical of the soaring twentieth century—or setting foot on its roof high in air, many fathoms higher in the deeps of space than where once we sat or stood, and thence gazing upon the sea of humanity beneath, or over the great city set between the two silver streams, and ever fascinating and beautiful with boyhood's memories, let us stop to recall the past. Let us think of that busy and potent life of John Chambers (1797-1875), and of that First Independent Church (1825-1873), which, like a spiritual storage battery, still supplies the power that pulses in many thousand souls. Man and edifice, though vanished from earth, give by their visible potencies or inspiring memories, in churches and Sunday Schools, in hallowed homes and beautiful careers of men and women, even to the fourth generation, the shining and convincing evidence of an earthly immortality, of life unto life. In the ever widening circles of eternity, that unspent influence will be felt.

Let us now descend from the mountain to the plain. Until the first early autumn of the twentieth century, one could see also on the east side of Thirteenth Street, north of Market and within a few feet of Filbert street, a four-sided, plain gray stone or marble post, in which even a casual passer-by could detect a survival. It was an old-timer, battered, rubbed, and chipped. Evidently it had once been a hitching post. Then, after sundry paintings and daubings, it had served for various advertising purposes, setting forth the changing business carried on in the dwelling place itself, in front of which it stood, or, in the cellar of the same. The Belgian block pavements, the flagstone sidewalks, the great Reading Railway Terminal, not far away, and the lofty business edifices of steel and stone, with a

thousand modern suggestions, all seem by their contrast to suggest antiquity in that horse post, and possibly its descent from once more noble uses.

When, however, to the evidence of eyesight, was added the play of memory and imagination, then there rose upon the mind's vision the little brick church, the Church of the Vow, that stood directly opposite, where John Chambers, master of hearts and transformer of human lives, wrought and taught. Within its now vanished walls the sunny pastor, the shining ornament in social life, the soul-stirring preacher, the unquailing soldier, who fought evil in every form, prayed, preached, and labored with men. Here he communicated quickening impulses not yet spent, but ever urging on to vaster issues. Yes, there is where the old church stood.

But this old battered horse-post,—so close by the curb stone as to wear ever fresh marks of tar and grease from passing wagon wheel hubs—what has it to do with John Chambers and the First Independent Church of Philadelphia, which is almost forgotten before a brood of lusty children and vigorous grand-children that now train thousands in the ways of holiness? Especially may we ask the question, since the church and the post were on opposite sides of the street, here a few feet wide.

Well, hereto hangs not only a tale, but literally, there hung a chain, with associations. Before the First Independent Church—that church which, according to scripture and reality, though not in common parlance, is not an edifice, but a company of believers—was formed, in 1825, there stood at Thirteenth and Filbert streets, a comparatively new building. It had been reared in fulfilment of a vow made during a storm on the Atlantic by a holy woman of prayer, whose life was saved. Those who carried out her purpose were Irish refugees, seeking freedom in America.

THE HISTORIC SITE

Being intense Sabbatarians, they would have no sound of passing wheel or hoof on the Lord's Day, for theirs was the age, also, of Delaware river cobble stones, and of iron tires. No pneumatic or sound deadening rubber-swathed wheels existed then. Hence, to warn off all matutinal disturbers of the solemnity of worship, and evening passers on wheels, an iron chain was stretched across the street, guarding either side, north or south, of the holy edifice. Thus, in quiet, the people within could worship God. The same rule held in other neighborhoods as in this congregation, and in front of the Presbyterian church edifice at Fourth and Arch, as the pictures show, a similar stout iron chain was stretched. It was the rule in Sabbath-keeping Philadelphia, according to the vigorous law of 1798.

Philadelphia was, early in the last century, a little place, of only tens of thousands, and so long as there were but few churches, the chains seemed appropriate. As the city grew, the problem for the firemen, mail wagons, and ambulances increased. In time not a single street running north or south, even in case of a fire, was open to the firemen, who were apt to make quick work in removing obstacles. A snow storm of petitions, for and against the repeal of the Acts of 1798 and the removal of the street chains, fell on the legislature and the law ceased to be operative, March 15, 1830. The old stone posts remained and occasionally one may be recognized by the keen-eyed antiquarian in dear old Philadelphia.

Both the first and second edifices, in which John Chambers labored in the Gospel, have been levelled and their sites built upon. That old post, effective Sabbath guardian, has gone; the First Independent Church, in edifice or organization, is no more. Nevertheless, its spirit lives. Like Huldah's home, our old church in its "second quarter" was a "college," and, fellow alumni, we shall try to tell the story

of our Alma Mater, "mother of us all," and sketch the life and work of the great and good man, with whom the First Independent Church began, continued, and ended. Both church and pastor have become as leaven that transforms, and in leavening is itself transformed,—lost to form and view, while yet potent. "The eagle's cry is heard even after its form disappears behind the mountain," says the Chinese proverb.

The "three measures of meal" still abide. From them is still supplied the bread of life to thousands. To change from metaphor to facts that are as hard as stone, and as enduring as human character, there are, first in point of time, the Bethany Mission Sunday-school and the Bethany Presbyterian Church; the John Chambers Memorial Church, an offshoot and outgrowth from the Bethany Church; the Presbyterian Church at Rutledge, Pa.; the St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in West Philadelphia; and the magnificent edifice and active congregation of the Chambers-Wylie Memorial Church on Broad below Pine Street, which enshrines the name not only of John Chambers, but of T. W. J. Wylie—two noble preachers of the gospel, sons of thunder and also of consolation.

Shall we attempt to measure influence, by even suggesting how three churches, one Presbyterian, one Baptist, and one Lutheran grew up out of the early prayer meetings before 1840, sustained chiefly by John Chambers' young men? Shall we hint at the missionary and educational impulses given at "the ends of the earth" by missionaries, or of lives nourished or transformed in our home land by the forty or more ministers of the gospel, who call John Chambers their father in God?

Nay, our dear under-shepherd himself, were he with us, would say, "Not unto us O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and thy truth's sake."

Nisi Dominus Frustra.

CHAPTER II.

IRELAND. A BONNY BAIRN.

Many a chairman, clerical or lay brother, in introducing John Chambers to an always delighted audience, referred to his "big Irish heart," and indeed he had in him all the winning and fascinating elements which make the jolly Irishman. He was emotional, clear-brained, rich in personal magnetism, and in general a "good fellow". He had in him also those traits which characterize the strong, clean, God-fearing and man-loving Puritan, whose career so often illustrates the highest type of manhood. Of superb and commanding figure, six feet high, and the most imposing individual known in the Chambers clan, he had an open illuminated face, and eyes that penetrated one's inmost nature. He was skilled in the hand-shake or shoulder pat, that warmed one's entire being into personal loyalty and were inspirations to friendship for the man and his Master. His face made you believe in the immortality of the soul. To these physical traits may be added an absolutely fearless mien and a flashing eye, that made his enemies fear him, even when they most hated his ways and words. With leonine countenance and majestic presence, was a tongue that beat the blarney stone, and yet was made, under God, a unerring instrument in winning souls. Some one has written of "The Pastor as Praiser". John Chambers by praising a boy made him a hero. Often a word from him came as Paul's clarion call, "Stand fast".

In brief, John Chambers possessed in person, bearing, and characteristics, the noble heritages of that Scottish race which settled in north Ireland, and which has shown itself, especially in America, one of the most distinctive of stocks,

rich in mental initiative and nervous energy, with power of manifold adaptation and persistency. In America the Scotch-Irish have certainly influenced, with power second to that of no other strain or nationality, the making of the American republic.

The people of north Ireland were noted for their Calvinism, which in practice is only another word for an inextinguishable love of freedom and democracy. Their faith fruited in free schools, popular education, family worship, familiarity with the Bible, hatred of priest-craft, Romanism, and British cruelty and oppression. In their Christianity, some Jewish notions in survival were perhaps put on a level with the teachings of Jesus, and their passionate devotion to Sabbath-keeping seemed sometimes to run into idolatry. They were not at all disinclined to controversy, and many of them were rather fond of a bit of a fight. Among the less sanctified, religion of a certain narrow sort and the contents of the whiskey bottle were very much in demand.

Naturally the British government with its aristocracy and political church, its absentee-landlordism and its corrupt parliament—which in the eighteenth century represented land rather than people—had much trouble with this insular people of many virtues and some glaring defects. The more oppressive measures of the first half and middle of the eighteenth century sent tens of thousands of emigrants to America, where they settled, especially in New Hampshire, the Carolinas, and western Pennsylvania. Only too glad to take up arms against the British, they furnished from their ranks for the Continental army and patriot partisan bodies, probably a larger proportion of soldiers than those of any other nationality among the colonists.¹ Many thousands of the "Yankees" of New England were Irishmen. In North Carolina they were the Regulators whom

¹ See *Romance of American Colonization*. Boston, 1898, p. 272.

“Bloody Billy” Tryon slaughtered. In Sullivan’s Expedition of 1779, one of the most important campaigns of the Revolution, four of the five generals, and possibly a majority of the rank and file, were born in Ireland, or were of Irish stock. At the banquet held in the forest, on the Chemung River on the site of Elmira, N. Y., on Saturday September 25, 1779, in the pavilion of greenery, one of the thirteen toasts drunk was this,—“May Ireland merit a stripe in the American standard.”¹

The general dissatisfaction in Ireland, not only among the Catholics who suffered from oppressive penal statutes, but also among the Protestants, broke out in 1798 into a rebellion fomented by the numerous secret societies then in the island. To read this page of history brings us to the parentage and birth of John Chambers, who sprung not from “illiterate” folk, as some have ignorantly imagined, but from intelligent and educated as well as patriotic parentage and ancestry.

William Chambers, the father of our American John, was born in 1768 of fairly well-to-do parents, and had a good education. One of his ancestors was an officer in the British navy. When about twenty-seven years of age, he married a Miss Smythe, or Smith, who was traditionally descended from Robert the Bruce, being one of a family which has furnished a long succession of Presbyterian ministers in Scotland, Ireland, and the United States. Their first son and eldest child, they named James. Their second son, John, is the subject of our biography. John Chambers was born on September 19, 1797 in Stewartstown, Tyrone county, Ireland.

There are four towns of this name in the United States, settled probably by Irishmen, and the original place in Ireland, in 1880, contained 931 souls.

¹ See the *Pathfinders of the Revolution*. Boston, 1900, p. 296.

JOHN CHAMBERS

William Chambers was a hot-headed, impulsive man of great physical vigor, a superb horseman, and a leader in athletic sports. In early manhood he was powerfully influenced in his political opinions and action by the ideas exploited in both the American and the French Revolutions. A fierce patriot, he became a follower of the famous Wolf Tone, and in their ups and downs on the wheel of politics, both master and disciple found themselves in prison within a few days of each other. William Chambers by some means escaped, but was soon involved in trouble with the British authorities, and so engaged passage to America.

Theobald Wolf Tone (1763-1798), orator and advocate of the freedom of Ireland, was educated at Trinity College, Dublin. He wrote pamphlets exposing British misgovernment, joined Protestants and Catholics in political fraternity, and founded at Belfast the first Society of United Irishmen, which William Chambers promptly joined. It is believed that at this time the green flag of Ireland was adopted, by uniting the orange and the blue. It is certain that at this time, green became the national color, although an emerald green standard was used in the sixteenth century.

One of these United Irishmen was Samuel Brown Wylie, who became the celebrated pastor, preacher, and Doctor of Divinity in Philadelphia. He left Ireland in 1797. In God's providence, exactly one century afterwards, the names of Chambers and Wylie were united in Philadelphia in that of a memorial church.

Wolf Tone, as secretary of the Roman Catholic committee, had already entered into secret negotiations with France and had to fly to the United States in 1795. He was afterwards captured on one of the ships of the French squadron, which was to invade Ireland.

The French having occupied Holland, had had a great fleet built in the Zuyder Zee to coöperate with the United

Irishmen, but at the battle of Camperduin, off the coast of North Holland, October 11th, 1797, the British Admiral Duncan destroyed the French and Dutch fleet, and the high hopes of those who looked for Irish independence were dashed to the ground. Hundreds of them fled.

Tried and sentenced to death, Wolf Tone committed suicide in his cell, November 19th, 1798. His son afterwards served in the armies of France and the United States and wrote the biography of his father. Ever since 1797, the British navy has had a ship named "Camperdown".

In Scotland I have had the pleasure of visiting the Duncan estate near Dundee, and in Holland of seeing Camperduin and its vicinity, both of land and water.

The defeat of the French fleet and the imprisonment, trial, and sentence of their leader, Wolf Tone, drove the United Irishmen into an insurrection of despair. At the battle of Vinegar Hill, in May, 1798, the revolt was crushed and the French general Humbert surrendered. Forthwith the British constables began their hunt for each one and all of the United Irishmen to land them in prison.

William Chambers was, as we have seen, arrested and thrown into prison at Stewartstown. In some way he escaped and eluded those who were seeking him, until he made his way down to the ship, on which his family was leaving Ireland for America. Besides his wife with her little boys, James and John, the latter an infant of three months at the breast, were other emigrants on board. In the hold, there was a stock of cabbages and down among these vegetables the refugee father hid himself. The British officers came on board and searched the ship from stem to stern to find their man, but his wife had encouraged him to get so deeply under the material for sauerkraut, and had covered him up so well, that, unable to find him, they

imagined he must have fled elsewhere. It was not until the ship was well out at sea that William Chambers rose up from among the cabbages and made himself visible. In later years, John Chambers visited the Stewartstown prison in which his father had been incarcerated.

In the slow ship they were knocked about on the wintry Atlantic during a stormy voyage of fourteen weeks, but happily arrived in the Delaware Bay, just when the buds were bursting, and the landscape of spring time putting on its fresh mantle of green. After their sea weariness the peach-orchards of Delaware must have looked as "fair as a garden of the Lord."

The Mayflower, which in 1620 bore the Pilgrims to America, was bound for the same beautiful region, then vaguely called "Virginia" but these people in 1799 were pilgrims bound to the forests of Ohio, the first of the Pilgrim states beyond the Alleghenies.¹

Landing at Newcastle, William Chambers and his little family soon joined a great party of emigrants who were turning their faces westward. Ohio was then, except for the river valleys and old maize lands of the Indians, an almost unbroken forest. In those days, when there was neither canal, railway nor trolley, such roads as existed, traversed chiefly the long stretches of dark woods. They were made of corduroy, or logs laid cross wise, with a surface covering of earth. Very few counties were as yet named or laid out in the Buckeye State, for it was only five years after General Anthony Wayne's great victory at Maumee Rapids over the Indians, and many of the red men were still in the land. Frontier life was still very rough, both as respects material comfort and the relations of the settlers with the Indians. The second stage of territorial life was entered upon in this

¹ See the Pilgrims in their Three Homes, Boston, 1898.

same year, 1799, and the State Legislature had met for the first time in Cincinnati.

Slowly and painfully the caravan of home seekers made its way through Pennsylvania over the great road through Harrisburg and the Juniata valley, Hollidaysburg and Pittsburg, where Scotchmen and Irishmen were still very numerous. Thence floating down the Ohio River, they reached the first county on the western side, which was later named after Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States. The Irish pioneer from Stewartstown helped to lay out the original townships of the county, in which Warren Ridge was situated, often going ahead to blaze some trees along the future road. Later, in 1799, he settled at Smithfield, and ultimately at Mount Pleasant. It was to this last named place that the visits of John Chambers, notably in 1843 and 1861, were made.

CHAPTER III.

OHIO. LIFE IN A LOG CABIN.

The little baby boy John's first American home was a log cabin and his cradle was made of part of a hollowed-out tree trunk. When he began noticing things from the doorway, his eyes took in a great space filled with a multitude of stumps, the dark and lonely forest, the new and strange fields of Indian corn, the tender green of spring, the gold of autumn, and the great white landscape of winter. When he was but three years old, Ohio became a state.

Remembering the witticism, so common a generation ago, that "some men are born great, and some are born in Ohio", we may believe that John Chambers came very near a double inheritance, though failing in but one share; for, to the end of his days, he boasted that he was by birth an Irishman.

Among his earliest playthings were the "buckeyes", or horse-chestnuts, from the particular tree, so plentiful in the new land. As the Bible was then, besides being in supreme honor as the Word of God, the one familiar volume, library, reference, and text-book, source of literary and intellectual recreation, John, as he learned to read, was as much delighted to find the *popular* name of "Ohio" in the Bible, as American tourists in Japan are, to hear the sound of this good State's name, in the Japanese for "good morning".¹

In after years, in the freshness of his metropolitan fame, John Chambers visited several times his old home, the log cabin in which he grew up. The house is now a weather-boarded dwelling place, but in the wooden walls is still to be seen the little hollow place or alcove, where were kept

¹ See I. Chronicles VI : 5, about Bukki, the father of Uzzi.

LIFE IN A LOG CABIN

the decanters or glasses, containing cherry brandy and whiskey, which were so popular and in such general use in those early days before teetotalism, or prohibition or no license was known. During the war of 1812, this house was used as a recruiting station for volunteers, and here the young soldiers pledged their glass in token of their patriotism and comradeship. Against this phase of social life, the boy John set his face from the first.

William Chambers lived the life of a pioneer in the American forest. He gained his bread by tilling the soil, and a little ready money by burning the timber and leaching the potash out of the ashes, and by other industries common to the forest. Indian cooking was soon learned and the food of the red man became popular. In fact there are very few purely American dishes, which are not evolutions from the Indian originals. Sugar was plentiful from the maple trees, but salt was very costly and hard to get. By boring wells, brine was found from which good salt could be made.

Life on the frontier was necessarily rude in some points, especially in moral relations with the Indians. As pretty much all Irishmen are very fond of religion and whiskey and a bit of a fight, there were often rough scenes. William Chambers was a strong character and his hot temper was easily roused, but his wife, an equally strong character, but with finer strength, was cool-headed and made a good balance for her husband. She was a noted nurse and especially skilful in the sickroom. Hence she was often called upon for help by both friends and strangers in time of pain and misfortune. Malaria and homesickness were common woes. Devoutly pious, she trained up her children in the fear and love of God, and by them and even by later generations her memory is treasured.

The religion of these pioneers may have been narrow, but it was strong and deep. It was based on a first-hand knowl-

edge of the English Bible. Even in his early life, as I remember Mr. Chambers saying, he revolted against bigotry and the kind of religion that was not rich in love to one's neighbor. These were psalm-singers and not hymn-using Christians, but the Methodist preachers and Christians of other sorts than Scotch-Irish Presbyterians were in the land. The boy John once heard an old gentleman say that he would as soon sit down to the Lord's Supper with a horse-thief, as with a man who sang Dr. Watt's version of the Psalms.

Little John also refused to touch liquor, for he saw the awful effects of its use, and grew to have a hatred of it. On one occasion, the little fellow rebuked a crowd of men, including his own father, for their drinking habits whereby the parent, William Chambers was greatly affected. "The heart of the child three years old is in the heart of the sage of sixty," as says the Japanese proverb, was true of John Chambers, the metropolitan preacher, but it was in childhood that God began to shape this bonnie bairn for a long life of usefulness. The boy in the Ohio forests was a hearty hater of all bickering and squabbling. He was often called upon to settle differences. He came to be known among neighbors and friends as "the little peacemaker." "The child is father to the man," and all his life John Chambers was mighty as a reconciler.

John Chambers's boyhood was thus spent in the wilderness in continuous hard work, by which he toughened his thews and kept his cheeks rosy, rising into brave, pure, and clean manhood. He took his part in the hard work of the farm, even to clearing the forest. He knew what it was to "lift up axes against thick trees." With his other brothers and sisters, he enjoyed life to the full. Politically, in this Jeffersonian era, his parents took the Democratic view of

things, so that their offspring had the spirit of democracy in their veins. All his life the intensely patriotic John followed the faith of his father, and was, as he called himself, a Constitutional State-Rights Democrat.

He was taught to read and write at home, but with that true instinct for education, which is inborn with Calvinists and the Scotch-Irishmen, his parents wished to have him better educated. They sent him, therefore, when he was but fifteen years of age, to Baltimore, where lived some of their relatives. A journey over the mountains in the early nineteenth century was like a trip to the Philippines in our days, but John gladly set out on horseback, with a party, in the spring of 1813, to the city on the Patapsco.

It seems that he had no special purpose of remaining permanently there, but Providence made his a stay of twelve years. After some experience at school, he decided to learn the jeweler's trade. Thus with business, and later with love, and then a call to the ministry, Baltimore was to be the city in which his mind was shaped, and which all his life was to him, socially, as magnet and star.

Patriotism, too, had something to do with making the Monumental City his home. It was war time, and the second struggle with Great Britain was on. As a municipality, the young city, but sixteen years old, had already become a famous place for the building of ships, the timber being floated down from the heart of New York state and from northern Pennsylvania, along the old line of Sullivan's march of 1779, by way of the Susquehanna River. Immediately on the declaration of war by Congress, a swarm of privateers sailed out of the Patapsco and Chesapeake to prey on Great Britain's commerce, especially in the West Indies. Hence the British government early decided that one of the first places to be occupied was Baltimore. The

stalwart youth from Ohio arrived in good time to hold a shovel and dig earth to throw up entrenchments, over which waved "The Star-Spangled Banner". He worked several days in the trenches. In September, 1814, the British forces made their attack under Col. Ross, a veteran under Sir John Moore and Wellington. Their commander was killed and the assault given up. The next day Admiral Cockburn's fleet bombarded Fort McHenry in vain. The attack from ship by water was as ignominious a failure as was the attempt by land. The happy result was the deliverance of the city and the birth of America's national song, "The Star-Spangled Banner". Thomas Scott Key, detained against his will on the deck of the British man-of-war *Minden*, was an indignant spectator of the bombardment, but in the morning of September 14th, saw his country's flag "in full glory reflected on the stream". In 1876 a bronze statue to his memory was erected and Old Defenders' Day keeps alive the stirring memories of September 11th, 1813.

CHAPTER IV.

MARYLAND. STUDENT DAYS IN BALTIMORE.

Soon after coming to Baltimore John Chambers became a member of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, of which the Rev. John Mason Duncan was pastor. Under the preaching of this eminent prophet, the mind of the young man expanded. Indeed it was so shaped and moulded by Dr. Duncan, that we may consider him as the greatest of all John Chambers' teachers, and his direct influence as greater than all subsequent schools and teachings. "My honored father in Christ" was Mr. Chambers' designation. Dr. Duncan saw in the young Ohio lad "an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures". He persuaded him to study for the ministry, which John, soon after uniting with the church, determined to do.

In pursuance of his plan, the lad entered the Classical Academy of the Rev. James Gray, D.D., formerly of Philadelphia, who had established in Baltimore one of the numerous first-class schools in the South, almost every one of which was founded by people of Scotch-Irish descent. When it came to the study of theology and practical training for the pastorate, John Chambers followed the method which was then the common one in America. Very few theological seminaries then existed in the country. That at New Brunswick, N. J., probably the oldest, was scarcely fifteen years of age; that at Princeton hardly over two years old. There were one or two in New England. For a young man having the ministry in view, it was the usual custom to study under his own pastor, a method not without great benefits, especially in this instance, as Dr. Duncan was one of the most eloquent ministers in the country. John Chambers learned how to preach by preaching. He was success-

ful with human beings because he knew them so well. He was a master of the scriptures "in the original English". Only those who afterward sat for years under John Chambers' preaching so long as to be saturated with his ideas, to know the basic principles of his thought and the workings of his mind, and have also read and studied Dr. Duncan's works, can realize how greatly the pupil was indebted to his great master.

In fact it was John Mason Duncan who gave the keynote of the gospel message as to its form, and it was John Chambers who filled out the strain. The theme was set in Baltimore, the variations given in Philadelphia. The pupil followed the master very closely in practical organization and discipline also. Dr. Duncan was suspicious of all creeds and confessions of faith when made instruments of ecclesiastical power. His trust in the people was sincere, profound, intense, and practical. In theology he ever laid stress on "the mediatorial reign of Christ and his absolute ability and willingness to save all mankind", which willingness it was his delight to demonstrate from the Scriptures and "to rescue the Gospel call from false philosophy". Dr. Duncan was jealous, almost to hostility, of theological seminaries, and also of the growing usurpations of power by synods. He dubbed America "the land of synods". He wrote at the time when even the liberty of the presbyteries seemed endangered by the centralizing power of the synods: "To persevere in such a course is to raise up a class of men who, from the nature of the case, must be destitute of sympathy with the people; who will rise above the people as being their superiors and governors, and who will ultimately distract and divide the church by their philosophic subtleties and literary distinction".

Verily the writer of those words was a prophet.

Dr. Duncan's trust in the people was so great because, as

he believed and taught, "the Bible is addressed to the people".

All of this John Chambers believed, carrying out, even to a fuller logical conclusion, his teacher's doctrines.

In his book entitled "An Essay on the Origin, Character and the Tendency of Creeds and Confessions of Faith as Instruments of Ecclesiastical Power", Dr. Duncan showed in his first chapter that "the intention of this essay, strictly political in character, involves the great question of human liberty to think, speak, to write, to act". He delivered also a course of lectures on "The General Principles in Moral Government", as they are exhibited in the first three chapters of Genesis, in which the same ideas are more fully carried out.

Here is one of his passages :

"Supposing then a minister—blameless, faithful, apt to teach, believing in the great truths now defined, *i.e.* 'the Word made flesh'—should come to preach, who has a right to prevent him, or to refuse to recognize him as a true bishop and to stigmatize him as a heretic? The apostle John says he is of God, and any trial to which the statute in question would subject him must result in the equivocal recognition of that fact. Presbyteries, as they are now constructed, will not and cannot admit such a man to ministerial and church fellowship without violating the principles of their party. They will not and cannot ordain such a man without something more. . . . What mischief would the most extensive liberality produce?"

In a biography of John Chambers we shall see the pertinence of this quotation when we come to the story of his ordination.

The instructor of young Chambers was the Rev. James Gray, D.D., who published a book entitled "The Mediatorial Reign of the Son of God, or the Absolute Ability and

Willingness of Jesus Christ to Save all Mankind, Demonstrated from the Scriptures—an Attempt to Rescue the Gospel Call from False Philosophy”, in which the grandeur, glory and all-embracing nature of the divine call to salvation is set forth.

This Dr. Gray, born in Ireland on Christmas day, 1770, had come to America in 1797, two years before his pupil, John Chambers. Probably he had been one of the United Irishmen. After preaching at Washington, N. Y., he settled, in 1808, in Philadelphia, over the Spruce Street Associate Reformed Church. In the Quaker City he became a very popular leader in many good things. He helped to found the Philadelphia Bible Society and received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Pennsylvania. With Rev. S. B. Wylie (father of the Dr. Wylie, whose name is embalmed in the title of the Chambers-Wylie Memorial Church), he opened a Classical Academy which became famous. After a few years he removed to Baltimore. Besides his study of theology and writing of the book on which his reputation rests—the Mediatorial Reign of the Son of God—(a favorite phrase of Mr. Chambers, even as the book was known by heart), he started a theological review which lived but a year. He died at Gettysburg, Pa., September 20, 1824.

It will be easily seen that under such teachers as Duncan and Gray, men of national repute, the Ohio boy received no mean training. On Garfield's theory, that a seat on a log, at the other end of which Mark Hopkins was teacher, might outrank the most showy university and apparatus, John Chambers was a college bred man. Under such direct, constant and personal influence as the Ohio boy in Baltimore received, the value of the quality of his education cannot be over estimated. It is very certain that no number of brick or stone edifices on a university campus, or profusion of apparatus in the laboratories, or comforts and luxuries in the

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student's room of to-day, can take the place of the personal influence of great teachers. Nor can these turn out men who excel in character and abilities the leaders of men in the United States of America in the early nineteenth century, among whom the home-bred John Chambers was a characteristic specimen.

Yet, though favored with such acute, learned, and inspiring teachers, and kindled by fervor with ideas that made heat as well as light in his soul, John Chambers' idea of the religion of Jesus was, that first of all it must be practical. There was no special division of it called "applied Christianity," To him it was all application. How it could ever be printed in a catechism and exist apart from life, he refused to see. He scorned professions of orthodoxy or of doctrine that did not quickly and permanently bear fruit in holy living, and in service for souls. With five or six other young men, he started prayer meetings and evangelistic labors.

When ready for examination for the ministry Mr. Chambers made his appearance before the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, and in May, 1824, received his license to preach the Gospel and to accept a call to the pastorate. This body of ministers and elders which licensed him was dissolved in the autumn of 1824, and Mr. Chambers was then received as a licentiate under the care of the Presbytery of Baltimore.

It was about ten months after his first visit to Philadelphia to receive license, that is in March, 1825, that Mr. Chambers was invited to preach in the Margaret Duncan (Associate Reformed) Church in Philadelphia. The little brick edifice had been erected in compliance with the will of, and as a gift from, the grandmother of Dr. John Mason Duncan, and the latter as well as Mr. Chambers' preceptor, Dr. James Mason Gray, had taken part in the dedicatory services in 1815.

The church itself at this time, 1825, was a struggling one. The edifice was in a poor and thinly inhabited part of the city. There was no fund for the support of the building, and the Associate Reformed denomination in the United States was weak and poor, with a scarcity of ministers. Happily other Presbyterians gave assistance and supplied the pulpit; otherwise, the building would have been often closed for long periods at a time. The first regular pastor was the Rev. Thomas Gilfillan McInnis, who was called to the service early in 1822. He died on the 26th of August, 1824, and the flock was left shepherdless. There was even better provision for the dead than for the living. On the 7th of October, 1824, Robert A. Caldcleugh and wife presented to the minister, elders, and fifty-two church members, a lot of ground, on the South side of Race street between what was the "Schuylkill Third" and "Schuylkill Fourth" streets, now Nineteenth and Twentieth, for a cemetery. This lot is eighteen feet six inches wide and one hundred and twenty-nine feet deep.

This was the situation, when Mr. Chambers was called, in March, 1825, to preach as a candidate. He came on from Baltimore and on two Sundays in April told the people of God's love in Christ Jesus. His sermons were as a mighty stack of fuel, with the breath of the Lord on the first Sabbath kindling it, and the wind of the Holy Spirit on the second Lord's Day turning it into vehement flame. A triple fire of love to God, of the people to the young pastor, and of his young heart to them began its glow, which paled not until after fifty years of beacon glory it was quenched by death.

"The flashes thereof are as flashes of fire
A very flame of Jehovah
Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can floods drown it."

CHAPTER V.

NEWTOWN. REJECTED OF MEN.

Since out of the Margaret Duncan Church, or "Church of the Vow", have grown, it is believed, at least ten other churches, and since the tradition of her ocean experiences has taken varied shapes and forms in its transmission, we shall give a narrative which is probably the most in accordance with fact.

Mrs. Margaret Duncan, on the death of her husband, a prosperous merchant of Philadelphia, determined to visit old friends in Stewartstown, Tyrone County, Ireland, in which she had been born. She took with her her little grandson, who was to become the famous Dr. John Mason Duncan. Returning across the ocean in the autumn of 1798, the ship sailing from Belfast, Ireland, was loaded heavily with many passengers, most of them poor emigrants, but had little cargo in the hold. It is said that the captain had never crossed the Atlantic. The compass was out of order, and with head winds and wet and foggy weather, the voyage was dangerously prolonged. The passengers were put on short allowance and there was no water. It is even said that in a severe storm the captain and crew deserted the vessel. The people suffered from agonizing thirst. They even talked of drawing lots to see who should be put to death and give his own flesh as food to the others.

Mrs. Duncan was then a woman between seventy and eighty years of age. Late tradition says the lot was drawn and she drew it and expected to be a victim. Mr. Chambers, though often referring to her experiences on the sea, makes no mention of the lot or of this dire extremity. Going into her cabin she gave herself to prayer, and vowed be-

fore God that if He would avert the impending blow and in mercy save her life and the ship's company she would forever consecrate herself and all that she had to His service ; that she would erect a church edifice for the congregation of the Associate Reformed people in Philadelphia with whom she worshipped, and that she would give and educate her little grandson for the Gospel ministry.

Not long after this, rain fell, and the agonizing thirst of those in the ship was relieved. Soon the shout, "sail ho" was heard from the man aloft. A vessel hove in sight and rescued them all. The ship entered the Delaware river and all reached Philadelphia in safety,

True to her vows, Margaret Duncan educated her grandson John Mason Duncan to preach the good news of God. Dying Nov. 16th, 1802, she left her money by will for the erection of a house of worship, which she minutely described, specifying that it was to be of the Associate Reformed communion. By various names, the "Margaret Duncan Church," or "The Vow Church," or "Saint Margaret's Church," the brick edifice on Thirteenth street near Filbert on the west side, stood until some time in the fifties. I can remember as a little boy going to see the debris of the ruins, the piled up old brick partially cleaned of mortar, the dust and the broken bits of lime, and the great hollow place where the cellar had been. In 1875, Mr. Chambers spoke of "the little church where we worshipped so long. . . It is a shame that the church was ever destroyed. However it was torn down, and we have nothing more to do with it".

His was the language of affection. As matter of cold fact, the "house was of plain brick, without the least trace of ornament and for many years was one of the gloomiest looking churches in the city. The dimensions were fifty by sixty feet." The edifice was opened for worship on the

26th of November, 1815. The dedication sermon was preached by the son of the vow, and the grandson of her who made it, Rev. John Mason Duncan. As before stated, Rev. James Gray, D.D., then with Dr. Wylie at the head of a classical school in Philadelphia, also took part.

Having been called to be the pastor of this church, Mr. Chambers surveyed his field to see what resources there were for sustaining permanent gospel work. He found no organized effort. There was no prayer-meeting, no Sunday School, not a man to lead in public prayer, and the three elders were all superannuated. The congregation was made up of humble people, poor, hard-working, industrious, with only here and there one among them who might be called rich; nor was there a family in which family worship was held. It was necessary therefore that the young man from Baltimore, who did not know ten people in Philadelphia when he first arrived, should borrow two devout men, Presbyterians, Wilfrid Hall and Hiram Ayres, to help him in meetings for social prayer. He then made application to Mr. Hall for the use of a room on Market street near what is now Seventeenth, in a district of vacant lots. Very few people were then living west of Broad street, and most of the streets now well known were not yet "cut through". He knew not whether any one would come to the meeting called for prayer, but God gave him a gracious surprise. When he arrived near the hour, "there was scarcely a spot for a human being to stand on". There and then began the Holy Spirit's workings which resulted in a whole family of Christian churches.

These prayer meetings were begun, according to due announcement, on the fourth Sunday in May. Their good influences were seen in the immediate enlargement of the church audience. By the beginning of July, there were

four men ready to speak or lead in prayer. By August 1st, over forty persons, many of them young men and women, had declared their faith in Christ, and were ready for Christian work. Mr. Chambers found a friend in Rev. Dr. Stiles Ely, a New England man, the principal founder of the Jefferson Medical College, and editor of *The Philadelphian*. From 1801 he had been pastor of the old Pine street Church, and was at that time moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly. As Mr. Chambers was not yet ordained, Dr. Ely preached the sermon and administered the Lord's Supper, when the new converts were received.

As Dr. Chambers told the story in 1875, "The next move was for a Sabbath School, and the marvel was with what eagerness they took hold of it . . . and carried it on with vigor, procured rooms and Sabbath School scholars and teachers and entered their names, and we went on and on from that very day after the institution of the prayer meeting, and the consequence was that we very soon felt that God was with us".

When the people of the Ninth Presbyterian, or Margaret Duncan Church on Thirteenth street, met together to vote a call to John Chambers, it was under the care of the First Presbytery of Philadelphia. Of course, therefore, the call must be approved at the regular meeting of the presbytery, and only after the usual examination of the candidate. Mr. Chambers came on from Baltimore, having accepted the call, and began his work as pastor and preacher-elect on the 9th day, or second Sabbath, in May, 1825. The presbytery was to meet in October in its semi-annual gathering. By a strange coincidence this was at Newtown, near the Nesha-miny stream, in Bucks county, Pa.—the field of the evangelical and revival labors of the ancestor of his betrothed, of whom more anon. Was the young preacher's imagination busy with the scenes of a century before?

The glories of autumn made lovely the landscape of this affluent agricultural county lying along the bend of the Delaware, rich in fruit, in Pennsylvania Germans, in English Quakers, and in Scotch-Irish people. Its name, that of Penn's county in England, is suggestive of the old world, and it is historically famous for being on the line of Washington's march to his great victory over the Hessians at Trenton, and through it part of Sullivan's men had moved for the chastisement of the Iroquois tribes at Newtown, near Elmira, N. Y., in 1779. Yet the historical associations uppermost in the mind of the young licentiate must have been those with the great-grandfather of his betrothed, who in this very region and near this very house of worship, had labored with Gilbert Tennant in the gospel.

The young minister's call and the letter announcing it, from the hands of the elders of the Ninth Church, Messrs. Ross, Hogg, and Reed, in the name of the congregation, was handed in to the assembled authorities. No doubt the document was on genuine honest rag paper, the only kind then known, and on a letter sheet, folded and dovetailed together and closed with sealing wax or wafer, without an envelope, directed on the outside and carried to him by stage coach. No doubt he himself had to go to the office in Baltimore to get it. In compliance with its request, the young licentiate's journey would be by stage through Elkton and Wilmington to Philadelphia. From Philadelphia to Newtown, twenty-seven miles northeast of Philadelphia, the route would probably be up the well-known road crossing the Neshaminy Creek.

The young licentiate, accustomed to do his own thinking, appeared with clean papers from the Presbytery of Baltimore, and asked that he might be taken under the care of the First Presbytery of Philadelphia, with a view to ordina-

tion and installation as pastor of the Ninth Church. Nevertheless, although he might be punctual and his papers clean, Dame Rumor had arrived before him. Several of her thousand tongues had declared, and even asseverated vehemently, that John Chambers was that strange, curious, and ever-changing thing called a "heretic." Often that undefined thing is a babe thrust into the cradle, while the orthodoxy of yesterday is turned out. A "heretic," as Saint Paul was once called, even as Jesus was before him, is very apt to be crucified to-day and glorified to-morrow. Indeed, "heresy" is almost as protean and as undefinable as "orthodoxy" itself. We shall see what kind of a "heretic" John Chambers was. His life for fifty years revealed the reality.

Within that little company gathered at Newtown there was, in the language of old times many a "heresio-mastix" or scourger of heresy, and a majority of the ministers present were already pre-determined to "hereticate" the young licentiate, who had already made the bounds of the little brick church on Thirteenth street too small to hold his hearers. Nevertheless our sympathies go out to all church bishops, whose duty it is to show that sudden popularity is no proof of fitness or character.

It developed during the examination that the head and front of the young man's offending was his belief in the Bible as an all sufficient rule of faith and practice. In this position, he was confirmed by the fact that the Westminster standards, the Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, teach that the Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and obedience. These all unite in declaring that the Scriptures are "given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life", "the rule of worship", the only rule of faith and obedience; which teach "what man is to

believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man", and form "the rule given us of God to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy Him."

In a word, to an independent thinker, loyal to the Bible as the word of God, as John Chambers was, the Westminster standards contain their own *reductio ad absurdum* to any one who puts creed, catechism, or confession above the Holy Scriptures, or who makes certain parts, or even a collection of parts, greater than the whole. Mr. Chambers, using his own words, believed that nothing could exceed infallibility, and was therefore satisfied with the infallible rule of the Scriptures. There was not then the freedom of faith, and the liberty of private interpretation of Holy Scripture and the Westminster symbols that is now happily the rule in the Presbyterian churches. The fault, if fault it were, was not solely on the young man's part.

The eyes of the "fathers and brethren" were opened and the "heretic" stood revealed. One of the members, the Rev. Dr. Ely, then proposed that the moderator should ask Mr. Chambers whether at the time of his licensure he subscribed to the Confession of Faith. He answered that he did not. When the second question was proposed, "Are you prepared to do so now?" he answered firmly, "I am not".

A motion was then made by Dr. Ely that Mr. Chambers and his papers be referred back to the Presbytery of Baltimore, and that the pulpit of the Ninth Church be declared vacant. Rev. Messrs. Patterson and Hoff were appointed a committee to perform the duty.

On Thursday evening of the same week, which was the regular evening for the weekly lecture, the committee of the Presbytery, which had met at Newtown, appeared at the church.

Although there were no telegraphs in those days, it was quickly known in Philadelphia, and to all the people of the Ninth Church, that Mr. Chambers, the man whom they had learned to love, had been rejected by the Presbytery. The preaching of the young minister had already resulted, under God, in a deep and strong religious interest. Consequently there was a large attendance and not a little excitement in the little brick edifice, so much so, indeed, that some of the congregation had quietly resolved to put the committee out in the street should they attempt to go into the pulpit.

Punctuality with the young pastor had already settled into what proved to be a life-long habit. He was at the church in good season. Finding the committee already there, he explained to the two men the situation and told them what the consequences would be if they attempted to fulfil their mission. Happily, however, both gentlemen being more concerned with the coming of the kingdom of God than about obeying the letter of their orders, did indeed go into the pulpit, but it was at the request of Mr. Chambers, who made them his firm friends for life. When there they coöperated with him, assisting to conduct the services, and not a word was said about the pulpit being vacant. Thus God, through his servant, quieted the Irishmen, and then and there magnified this man who had a genius for friendship and was an expert peace-maker; all of which was for the coming of the kingdom and the good of souls.

As days passed by, the people of the congregation, realizing that if they wanted to have a minister they would have to be an independent church, took prompt action. After due notice had been given, a congregational meeting was held. By a vote of four to one the people declared themselves independent of all church courts, with only Christ as their Master. By another vote, equally large, they resolved to retain John Chambers as their minister.

The minority, led by Mr. Moses Reed, one of the elders, withdrew, and in a room on Race street organized themselves as the Ninth Presbyterian Church. In the law suit that followed, the seceders won their case. With the edifice, given up in 1830, went the possession of the small burying ground on Race street, above Nineteenth, in which sleeps the dust of the Ross family and the father of the renowned soldier's friend, Miss Anna Ross, whom defenders of the Union from 1861 to 1865, and the survivors of the Grand Army remember so well. In the writer's memory her name and face are not forgotten, for she was his Sunday School teacher.

CHAPTER VI.

NEW ENGLAND. ORDINATION AT NEW HAVEN.

In Nevius' Presbyterian Encyclopedia, which contains a brief sketch of the career of John Chambers and a wood-cut portrait of him in his prime, it is stated, that "When Mr. Duncan about this time renounced the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church into which the Associate Reformed, with Dr. Mason and others had been merged, Dr. Chambers followed his example, from sympathy with his teacher". Was the pupil's "sympathy" stronger than were the preachers convictions?

Meanwhile the young minister, then twenty-seven years old, returned to Baltimore to meet the Presbytery and seek ordination. Here again another obstacle arose. The theologians on the Patapsco declared that Mr. Chambers was no longer a licentiate under their care, and handed him back his papers. Again was John Chambers preacher of the gospel rejected of men. Was ecclesiasticism good order in this case? Did the true cause of this rather rough treatment lie in this, that he had been a pupil of John Mason Duncan, the independent?

What should the young man do? Disowned of presbyteries and looked at suspiciously by the fathers and lords in the church, where should he go? As he himself wrote on his fiftieth anniversary, May 9th, 1875:

"The prospect, therefore, was rather chilly. I had left my home of many years in the city of Baltimore, where I received all the education that ever was bestowed upon me, and where I sat at the feet of that Gamaliel, the Reverend John Mason Duncan, to whom under God, I am indebted, entirely by His grace, for the position I occupy to-day. My

heart had been much interested in religious matters for two or three years before I left Baltimore. There were five or six of us young men, as students of Mr. Duncan, and we had organized some meetings through the city of Baltimore, and God was with us; and the warm heart—if I had any warm heart at all—that I brought to Philadelphia, was kindled at the altar of those dear young brethren. How much we are indebted to God for young men! How much, my brethren, are the eldership, are you, am I, indebted to young men!" Dr. Chambers's last words in this paragraph are especially appropriate, because it is the tendency of most theologians and elderly men to teach that God *was*, not that he is. With young men, God's existence is more likely to be in the present tense.

The ecclesiastical orphan, thus cast fatherless and friendless upon the wide world, began to inquire whither he should go to seek ordination. Happily there were other bodies of Christians and a living church of Christ, besides the one which had withheld its blessing. Happily too, there were men in the Presbyterian Churches of Philadelphia, warm friends, who were able to direct him wisely, one of them being the large-hearted scholar, James Patriot Wilson, D.D., pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, predecessor of Albert Barnes, and then fifty-six years old. The other was Rev. Thomas Harvey Skinner, D.D., pastor of the Fifth Presbyterian Church in Locust street, and who, twenty-six years afterwards, became the famous professor in Union Theological Seminary of New York City. Both of these men were in hearty sympathy with those views of truth afterwards called the "New School". These brethren with Dr. Duncan, advised Mr. Chambers to go into Yankee land and there be ordained by Congregational clergymen. They gave him letters of introduction to the

JOHN CHAMBERS

Rev. Nathaniel W. Taylor, the famous exponent of "the new divinity" and then of the theological department of Yale College.

It was not Presbyterianism only that was at this era being rocked on the waves of progress by the gales of the Spirit. About this time, or shortly afterwards, Connecticut Congregationalism was being excited and lifted out of torpor and routine by the breezy discussions of "Taylorism" and "Tylerism". The former expressed the views of Dr. Nathaniel William Taylor, the successor of Moses Stuart, and then holding the Dwight professorship in the Theological Department of Yale College. The young seminary opened in 1822 was therefore but three years old when Mr. Chambers appeared to be ordained. Whatever may be the true label we put upon Dr. N. W. Taylor, he was one of the greatest of America's theologians when the appeal was being taken from Calvin to Christ. He taught a modification of Hopkinsism which many Presbyterians regarded as hostile to Calvinism and many New Englanders as "unsound". As Mr. Chambers had already done, Dr. Taylor repudiated the words "predestinate" and "decreed" and used the word "purposed" concerning God's desire to save men. Before he died, in 1858, he had trained over seven hundred ministers. Ex-President Dwight, in his recent book on Men and Memories of Yale, presents him felicitously in word and picture.

About the time also of rising "Taylorism" the new methods of preaching and revival used by Rev. C. G. Finney, afterwards president of Oberlin College, excited much alarm among the men of the old school. How strange are the variations and how curious is the progress of orthodoxy! Most of the great revivalists of this country were nourished in the Congregational churches; and, from Finney to Moody, they were at first looked upon with suspicion. Later

they were welcomed and lauded as the saviors of orthodoxy. Verily the "earthen vessel" is sometimes more in evidence than the "heavenly treasure".

To combat the views of Dr. Taylor, Dr. Bennett Tyler, ex-president of Dartmouth College, and then pastor at Portland, Me., was hailed as the champion by all the leading spirits among the "conservatives", though both of these great teachers had modified the original Calvinism. Of Dr. Tyler it has been well said that "In forming his system he began not with mind, but with the Bible, and he looked for no advances in theology except such as come from a richer Christian experience". Dr. Tyler founded a theological institute at East Windsor, Conn., in 1834, so long and ably presided over by the cultured Philadelphian, Chester D. Hartranft, D.D., brother of Pennsylvania's soldier and governor.

The monuments of these controversies between "Taylorism" and "Tylerism", now forgotten, are seen in the superb theological seminaries of New Haven and Hartford, but the points of difference, as now discoverable only under the microscope of research, are of no practical importance. Hardly any one except the hair-splitting philosophers can state them. They have been forgotten in the larger vision of advancing Christianity. So will it be with most of the controversies of to-day, especially those centering in the "higher criticism".

It was to Dr. N. W. Taylor, that Mr. Chambers had letters, as well as to Dr. Leonard Bacon, afterwards the famous opponent of slavery, and author, in 1833 of the hymn,

" O God beneath thy guiding hand
Our exiled fathers crossed the sea,
And when they trod the wintry strand
With prayer and psalm they worshipped thee."

For over twenty years Dr. Bacon was pastor of the First Congregational Church in New Haven, one of the professors in Yale Divinity School, and the progenitor of a remarkably intellectual family. Until his death, the day before Christmas of 1881, he was a commanding figure in American history. Of the council which ordained Mr. Chambers he was the scribe. It will be seen at a glance that the ecclesiastical exile from Philadelphia and Baltimore was to stand before giants. If these mighty men of God could give him ordination, why need he mourn the loss of clerical favor nearer home?

Thus armed with letters of commendation, the young Irish-American proceeded to the City of Elms, in the opening week of December, 1825. It was the first year of John Quincy Adams's administration, and the Erie Canal had joined the waters of the great lakes with the Atlantic. It was an era of mighty conquests over nature, and the heart of the young man who was thrilling with the spirit of the age and of the ages, beat high with hope. He, too, wanted to do great things for God and help in making the world better. He sought out those addressed, and handed to them his letters. Two days afterwards, the Association of Congregational ministers of the Western District of New Haven County was called together by the Moderator, and eight ministers were present in the assembly which was held in the Centre Church.

Of the meeting, the following official record was copied out for the biographer, at the request of Rev. Dr. T. T. Munger, author of *The Freedom of Faith*, and through the courtesy of Rev. Franklin Dexter, librarian of Yale University.

"At a Special Meeting of the Association of the Western District of New Haven County, convened by letters from the Moderator and holden in New Haven, December 7th, 1825.

ORDINATION AT NEW HAVEN

Present—Messrs. S. W. Stebbins, J. Day, D.D., E. Scranton, S. Merwin, J. Allen, E. T. Fitch and L. Bacon.

Mr. Stebbins was chosen Moderator, and Mr. Bacon, Scribe. The session was opened with prayer.

Mr. John Chambers, a licentiate of the late second Presbytery of Philadelphia, now dissolved, being introduced to the Association by Mr. Merwin, requested to be ordained to the ministry of the Gospel, and producing proper testimonials of his standing as a member of the church of Christ ; of his regular license to preach the Gospel, and of his having passed through a period of probation, with proper acceptance, the Association, after examining him as to his belief in the doctrines of the Gospel, his experimental acquaintance with religion, and his motives in desiring the work of the ministry,

Voted to proceed to his ordination this evening at half-past six o'clock.

Voted that the parts be performed as follows : The introductory prayer to be offered by Mr. Scranton ; the sermon to be preached by Professor Fitch ; the ordaining prayer to be offered by Mr. Merwin, during which Messrs. Stebbins, Fitch and Merwin to impose hands ; the charge to be given by Mr. Stebbins ; the right hand of fellowship by Mr. Bacon ; the concluding prayer to be offered by Mr. Allen. Adjourned to meet in the Centre Meeting-house at half-past six o'clock.

Met according to adjournment. The ordination took place according to the preceding votes.

Mr. Chambers, at his request, was admitted a member of the Association.

The minutes were read and accepted.

[TEST]

LEONARD BACON, Scribe."

The ordination sermon was duly preached in the evening by the Rev. Professor Eleazer T. Fitch, D.D., Livingstone

Professor of Divinity in Yale College, and then Mr. Chambers was ordained by the laying on of hands of the three appointed ministers of the Association.

According to Congregational usage an Association of ministers does not ordain to the ministry, but a Council does. The Association may transform itself into a Council for the time being. In Connecticut the Consociation, or standing council, performed this function. In any event, John Chambers was properly ordained to the Gospel ministry according to due Congregational call, form, and precedent.

Furthermore, by his own request, he became a member of the Association. This did not make him a "Congregationalist", but it showed his hearty sympathy with the principles and ideas of his fellow members. For forty-eight years, his only ministerial standing and connection was in the Congregational body as an independent minister, though his church was governed according to Presbyterian form and usage. So strong and deep was his faith in the validity of non-Episcopal and non-Presbyterian ordination that he showed it all his life by his works. He ordained during the course of his ministry several young men to the work of the gospel. One of these impressive ceremonies I myself witnessed, probably about 1859. After preaching a sermon and reading the papers or certificates of the candidate, Mr. Chambers called his elders, those grand men of God, Burtis, Luther, Steinmetz, and Walton around him. Then upon the head of the kneeling young man he and they laid their hands, solemnly ordaining him to the gospel in true apostolic style.

Years afterwards, in 1892, one of his own boys, even the biographer, delivered the Dudleian lecture at Harvard University in Appleton Chapel on "The Validity of non-Episcopal Ordination", or, more exactly, the validity of

ordination by the congregation, according to the method of the primitive Christian Churches¹. By a strange coincidence, it was on the same night, Dec. 7, on which Mr. Chambers was ordained, and thus the sixty-seventh anniversary of his ordination.

Mr. Chambers left New Haven the next morning, Dec. 8th, 1825. The elms were leafless, but his heart was happy and his face radiant with joy. Coming back to minister to his constantly increasing flock, he baptized on the first Sunday in January, 1826, several new communicants and administered for the first time the memorial supper of Jesus. It was a day long to be remembered, for between seventy and eighty souls were on this occasion added to the church, and the young pastor, in the joy of his initial service, baptized the first child that ever received the dedicating waters from his hands, John Chambers Arrison, the first of a mighty host.

In 1875, the white-haired pastor who had welcomed 3,585 members into his church, said: "Thus it seemed that the tide of God's favor was taken at the flood, and it has brought us to where we are to-day".

¹ See the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, for October, 1893.

CHAPTER VII.

HOME AND CHURCH. LOVE AND WORK.

Let us now look into John Chambers's inner life,—of the heart as well as the intellect. We have seen how the vigorous and lusty twig which grew up in the classical academy of Baltimore began to bend away from certain statements and formulæ in the Westminster symbols, *as then interpreted to him*, which gave the afterwards robust and widespreading tree a tremendous inclination. “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” John Chambers's convictions shaped his message and colored all his preaching. There were probably reasons, other than those merely intellectual, for the young man's tremendous antipathy to the idea that the fullness of the Christian life and the message of Jesus could be compressed into the mathematical statements made at Westminster during the days of the British Commonwealth.

When I was a student at Rutgers College, New Brunswick, New Jersey, from 1865 to 1869, I was asked, as an incoming freshman, by the president, Rev. William H. Campbell, D.D., LL.D., concerning my religious training. I told him how much I owed to John Chambers in Philadelphia. A bland light overspread the full expanse of that face, so seamed with thought and studious toil and which nothing but warm affection could call handsome. Indeed, it seemed as though every wrinkle was smoothed out, as a prairie-like smile suffused its whole area. Then, laughing heartily, he said, “Well, I can remember when he had orthodoxy taught him with the sole of a slipper.” Evidently then, according to the accepted and supposedly wholesome custom of the times, the future preacher received at intervals

what was expected to be a physical aid to faith, though in reality the result was the reverse of what was expected. Whether the slipper was applied to the lad before or after intellectual defection, its use induced reaction. Whether, as is probable, the correction by leather came from the employer to whom the apprentice was bound, or from the schoolmaster is not known. The boy would not accept Westminsterism whole, certainly not as then interpreted.

Above all, this young Irish-American lad had a big, warm heart. As he read the Scriptures for himself he was early filled with that idea, which afterwards he infused into the lives of thousands, that the gospel is a glorious message to the individual, that the Christian life is a Way, as well as a belief, that there are elements in religious life and experience which do not submit to exact definitions, and that the mercy of God is the largest factor of the Divine life toward wrong-doing man. In this the time of his youth, as well as all through his life, he felt deeply rather than thought coolly. Whether we must ascribe most or all of the results to the towering personality of his teacher, John Mason Duncan, and of his long continued training at a most susceptible age under so forceful a master, certainly, whatever our philosophy of the known facts may be, he was filled with an antipathy to creeds. In a time and climate of theological severity, and amid the rancor of controversy, he was, among his clerical brethren who set higher value than he did, upon "the form of sound words" or logical formulas, verily a pilgrim and stranger upon the earth. He rejoiced to see by faith the day we live in, even the work of the General Assembly, and of the Synods and Presbyteries of 1903.

Ever hoping and praying for the day to come when the creeds, especially of the Presbyterian body of churches, in which he had been educated, would be revised, he lived and

"died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar". The change of theological climate, the revision of the Westminster symbols and the simplification of theology into which we, in this twentieth century have come, even the work of the General Assembly, that met in New York in 1902, and in Los Angeles in 1903, was what he in hope long ago looked for. He believed in expressing forms of faith in the language of living men, not of dead ones, for he ever taught not only that God was, but that He is.

To recapitulate, John Chambers left the classical academy in 1818, after five years' instruction. He remained seven years longer in Baltimore, active in church life and work. During this time, he was occupied also in business, thus earning his livelihood, for he had learned the trade of a jeweler. During these years, his life was made rich and joyous by one who had crossed his path, and who was to be to him his beloved wife, Miss Helen McHenry. She was the first of three noble specimens of womanhood who were to light his household fire, irradiate his home, double and share his joys and sorrows. How often and how tenderly did "our pastor" refer to "the partner of his life", the beloved "companion of his bosom!" What a refining power, what a potent influence, stimulating to marital purity and mutual "love that lightens all distress", was his steadfast example. It was his frequent felicitous use of passages from the Song of Songs, that so impressed one boy's mind that, despite his vow, registered in college, never to write a "commentary", he composed and published "The Lily Among Thorns".¹

Let us look at the heredity of his affianced. As early as 1735, Francis McHenry, an ordained minister of the

¹ The Lily Among Thorns. A Study of the Biblical Drama entitled The Song of Songs. Boston, 1889.

HOME AND CHURCH

Presbyterian church came from Ireland to America and was associated with Gilbert Tennant in the Deep Run, or Neshaminy, churches in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and also in the beginnings of the Log College, which by direct evolution became the great Princeton University.

His grandson was Francis Dean McHenry, a shipping merchant of Baltimore, whose daughter Helen was born in September, 1805, when the boy in Ohio was nearly seven years old. When he met her in Baltimore, he had the lover's "three T's" or elements of success—propinquity, opportunity, and importunity. Those who knew John Chambers in later life will not marvel why he won her, rather might they wonder how any maiden could resist the urgency of the warm hearted and handsome youth, who was the largest and handsomest of the Chambers family. As matter of fact, she made capitulation in due time and was led to the altar.

It was but a very short time after John Chambers had reached the first stadium in his successful career and was an ordained minister, that the marriage took place in Baltimore, March 14th, 1826.

The young preacher brought his bride to Philadelphia and enjoyed just three years and six months of wedded happiness with the companion of his youth. Those who remember Mrs. Chambers speak of her beauty and animation, and of her whole-hearted sympathy with her husband's work, but her life was destined to be brief. The first child born of the union was John Mason Duncan Chambers, whom the happy father joyfully named after his spiritual father, under whom his soul life had opened and ripened in Baltimore. His second child, a daughter, Helen Frances Chambers, now Mrs. James Hackett, living at Pomfret Centre, Conn., still survives him.

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John Mason Duncan Chambers, born March 15, 1827, married Miss Emma Ward of Winchester, Virginia, in October, 1851. He died November, 1857, leaving three children, of whom Helen McHenry is the only survivor. She is married to Mr. George Lothrop Bradley, of Pomfret Centre, Conn., and Washington, D. C.

Helen Frances Chambers, born April 25, 1829, was married July 17, 1849, to Mr. James Hackett, of Baltimore. Their one surviving child, Helen McHenry Hackett, married George F. Miles. With Mrs. Hackett, these two grandchildren are the only descendants of John Chambers.

The pastor, elect and ordained, brought his bride to Philadelphia and took a house on Thirteenth street, below Walnut, and there began his home. Being on the same street as his church, he had not been many months at work before scores of people living on Thirteenth, or streets parallel and crossing it, were attracted to become worshippers with him as their pastor. As one lady, still lovely in her eighty years of life, tells the story from girlhood's memories, the "Chamberites", as they were at first called, were every Sunday morning seen to be moving with their faces set northward toward "the Church of the Vow"; and the preacher, being from the first the soul of promptness, "led the procession".

Between Thirteenth and Broad streets and Walnut and Locust, had grown up "the Village", where for lack of accommodation in the church edifice, the Sunday School was established. On Sabbath afternoons, the whole school adjourned bodily to the church, walking up Thirteenth street to Filbert.

Yet even with a growing Sunday School and enlarging church membership, the way of the young pastor was far from smooth, and the First Independent Church of Phila-

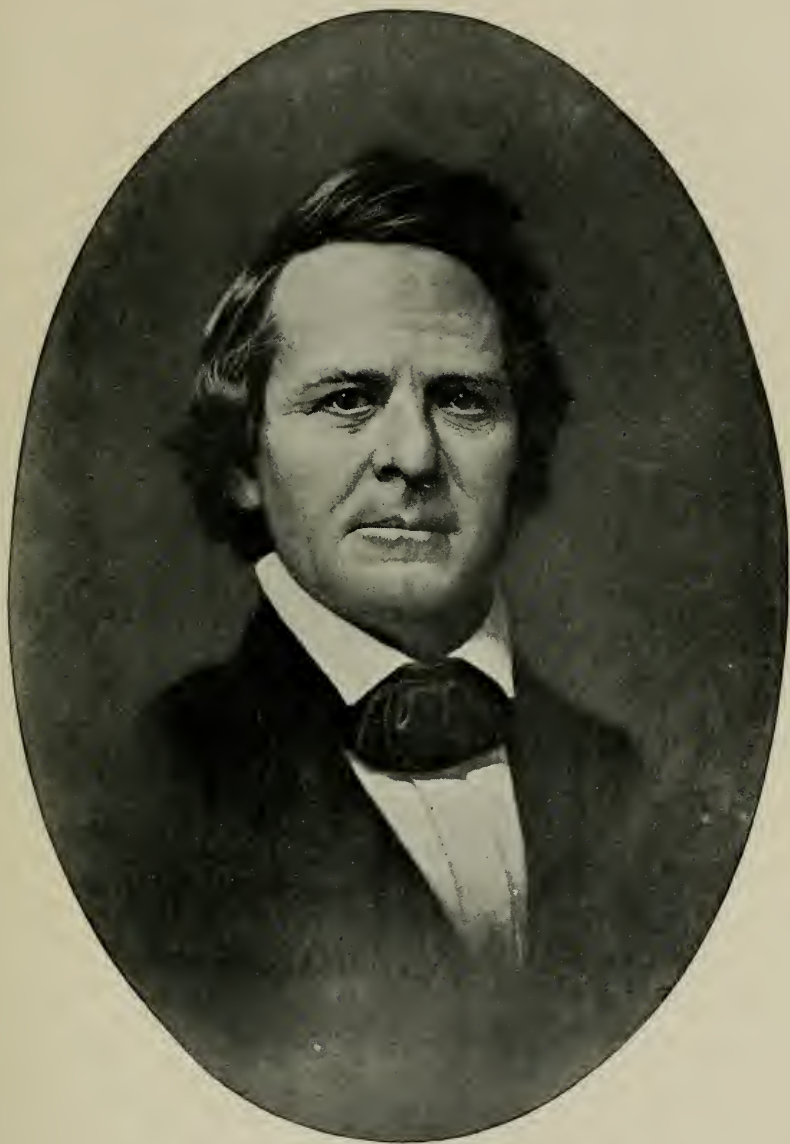
delphia was in no danger of being smothered with kindness. Almost as a matter of course, an industrious army of prophets arose to foretell failure to a church founded on the Bible alone. Rather, instead of "prophets", we should say a busy host of fortune-tellers, since the Hebrew and Biblical word, prophet, does not mean predictor, but the utterer of truth. The little ecclesiastical infant, rather foundling, needed much warmth of prayer and devotion, certainly during its first decade. With shakings of the head and emphatic use of the hands in dreadful warning of calamity, the Philadelphia variety of soothsayers declared that in two or three years, the First Independent Church would go to pieces. Both laymen and ministers were loud in declaring that such a church, without a "creed," (though the Bible is a very library of creeds), could not thrive or live. The idea of success in rearing a church, with the Holy Scriptures only as a rule of faith and practice, was scoffed at. In our day, it does indeed seem strange that Protestant ministers should so talk, but experience, the great teacher, showed "the divine sufficiency of the Bible as a rule of faith and practice, and also a bond of union holding together a large and flourishing congregation in Christian love and harmony". So wrote John Chambers in 1859.

However, "liberal", or, rather scriptural, in his theological opinions, the young minister was, since especially he cared nothing for any man's boasted "predestination" or "election" to eternal life, unless that same man showed the fruits of faith in holy living, he was anything but liberal in his ideas of morals, or as related to amusements, or the keeping of the Christian day of rest. We shall see this clearly when we note how he dealt with one of his theatre-going elders.

In his fortieth anniversary sermon, May 14th, 1865, which was printed, Mr. Chambers referred to this experience, stating that during the two-score years of his ministry no word of disagreement, or of an unpleasant character with his fellow-presbyters, had ever been spoken, with the exception that we are about to describe, and which, in order to make a perfectly correct record, Mr. Chambers himself would not omit.

Shortly after administering his first communion, the young pastor found that "one of the original elders was in the habit of attending theatrical amusements and of taking his children with him". What resulted from this discovery is given in his own words :

"This conduct was so directly in opposition to what were then my convictions of what was right, and which opinion I still hold—so directly in the face of the teachings of the Bible, that I could not remain silent under it, but at once sought Mr. ———, in order that we might have a mutual explanation of our views. Upon my putting the question to him, as to whether he thought his course was a proper one—whether it was the love of Christ which induced him to frequent such places, and if in so doing he was bringing up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord by making them his companions on such occasions, I found that he was obstinate in his determination to adhere to his own course of action. I referred him to Second Corinthians, sixth chapter, fourteenth to eighteenth verse, and then told him that I could not and would not serve with him in the Session ; that either he or I must resign, and proposed that it should be left to the vote of the Church. If the Church advocated or permitted indulgence in theatrical amusements, if it was considered a means of grace and the proper school in which children were to be trained up for God, there was



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About 1856.

but one path for me to pursue—to dissolve my connection with them at once. If on the contrary they sustained me in my views, Mr. ——— must resign. He was unwilling to submit the matter to the vote of the congregation, knowing only too well that their standard of piety was a high one, and that his conduct would meet with their severe displeasure. Consequently he resigned his office of elder in the spring of 1826, and from that day to this neither elder nor lay member has advocated visits to the theatre as the way to heaven, and I am sure with the Bible as their rule of life, never will”.

It soon became very evident that the young minister and his people were Separatists of a strict sort. They believed in being “in the world”, but not “of the world”. The passages in Corinthians which had been quoted, “Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate”, was one on which the pastor preached many times in the course of his ministry. His insistence was from the first that Christian people ought to find their enjoyment in religion and be visibly different from those who had no scruples against cards, dancing, gaming, or the theatre.

Was not John Chambers right? He had a just fear of the real influence of these methods of killing time. Furthermore, those who can remember the Chestnut street, of even as late as the sixties, need not wonder at his earnest and pointed preaching—for every sermon-bullet of John Chambers hit the target, and usually the bull’s eye. In language not to be mistaken and often with tears, he called upon young men and women to rise upon higher levels into a more spiritual life than was then common. A realistic description of the vice, that openly flaunted itself on Philadelphia’s gayest street, would not here be in good taste, or be relished if given; but it was something horrible.

Whether the world, on the whole, is getting better or worse, it is quite certain that the houses of ill-fame, the midnight street-walkers and the pictures once visible in public places and in the saloons, inexpressibly obscene as they were, are not found at the present time, or if so, are much more concealed, for they have at least been driven to cover. It seemed to be the idea of the young minister that he ought to know what was going on in the world, and to teach his people to know, while yet choosing the pure, and avoiding the impure. He was liberal enough in his attitude to his brethren of other names, always working with them in practical religion.

Some of the years of his first marriage were spent on Arch street, near 13th street. In later years he lived on Walnut above Broad on the south side. From about the time of "the war" and until his death, he dwelt at the corner of 12th and Girard street north of Chestnut. Thus his whole pastoral life was spent in the very heart of the city, seeing things as they were, and with his eyes open to the manner in which the people amused themselves.

CHAPTER VIII.

"THE WAR HORSE OF THE TEMPERANCE CAUSE."

A large number, and probably a majority of the large congregation which soon gathered around John Chambers, were people from Scotland or Scottish-Ireland, and, like most of this sturdy race, were very fond of both religion and whiskey. The customs of society in the thirties made the social glass very frequent. The chief decoration of the sideboard was usually a decanter and glasses. Even a funeral was not considered complete in all its appointments, unless there was plenty of liquor drunk before the corpse was taken out of the house, much more being consumed when the company came back.

From the very first, the young pastor took a firm stand against indulgence in any intoxicating liquor, and spoke his mind most freely, in favor not only of temperance but also of total abstinence. He determined to use his oratorical talents in arousing public sentiment against the drinking habits of his day, and he presided over the first public temperance meeting held in Philadelphia. He went further. He gave notice from his pulpit that he should enter no house where liquors were provided, not even to hold services over the dead.

This announcement made a tremendous sensation, and no doubt some thought that the foundations of society were endangered. Soon after this ultimatum, the pastor repaired to a house to conduct services over the dead, and found that liquors were being served. Instantly going out doors, he remained standing in a drenching rain, refusing to officiate, until the corpse had been brought to him.

Throughout his long ministry, he continued this work, seeking by sermons, addresses, prayers, the taking of pledges, the assistance of reformed inebriates, the training of young men, and by every other lawful means to promote temperance and total abstinence. Not always abstemious in his language, he made bitter enemies among the liquor dealers, but although of superb physical frame and excellent muscular power he used no physical force or carnal methods of defence, with possibly one exception. Once a publican seized him by the collar, as he was walking along the street, and swore vociferously at him. Pretty soon he had abused his victim so exhaustively, that he was himself out of breath. At the end of this verbal discharge, Mr. Chambers who had listened quietly, lifted his hat, thanked him, said "good morning," and went his way. In 1849 he was introduced to an audience as "the war-horse of the temperance cause." Ever after this he was known as "the war-horse." One elder left his church on this liquor issue.

It began to look as if an independent church (which is very far from being a Congregational Church) was, as some had predicted, "anything that John Chambers chose to make it." Certainly under the dominating personality of so bold and yet so tender a soldier of Christ, the church quickly rose to be one of the most aggressive in the city of Penn.

After ten or fifteen years of service, when his congregation had increased and lads and lassies were multiplied, he organized in 1840 the Youth's Temperance Society. It was made up of young people. Once a month or every two months, alternating with the Missionary Society, the afternoon Sunday School service took the form of a temperance meeting; at which, besides prayer and singing, addresses were made by speakers, either from the congregation or

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without. There were also occasionally recitations, but the crowning event of the year, for which preparations were made often weeks in advance, was the anniversary. This was held on the evening of Washington's Birthday, February 22d, either in the church edifice or at Concert Hall on Chestnut Street, which is now occupied by the Public Library.

Exquisitely lovely in memory rises the scene, when after duly committing to memory and practicing, cutting down to the right length and repeatedly rehearsing the speeches, the dialogues and the musical parts, the boys and the girls, in a glow of excitement, gathered in the rooms below the stage. The little maidens in their best clothes and most bewitching adornments in hair and dress and slippers, seemed to me most radiantly lovely. The boys who were to be speakers had on their coats a rosette of quilled ribbon, in the center of which was a tinsel star, from which gushed forth a cataract of red, white, and blue satin pendants or streamers. How gay and happy we all were! How heaven-like it all appeared! Except for the thumping of one's heart under his ribs, it seemed positive rapture to hear one's name announced by the superintendent, Aaron H. Burtis—that superb re-incarnation, as we thought, of George Washington. To make one's bow before a thousand human beings, to speak his piece with high pulse and magnetic thrills, were delights that filled a few triumphant moments. Stirring are the memories of the genial pastor, ever ready to cheer the boys, the portly form of Robert Luther, the happy faces of John Yard, Francis Newland, Daniel Steinmetz and Rudolph S. Walton, and the younger but constantly efficient Robert H. Hinckley, Jr. The Youth's Temperance Society flourished until the close of Mr. Chambers' ministry. Although all of the lads trained under John Chambers did

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not as they grew up, become Prohibitionists, yet a small army of good citizens, earnest in temperance reform, owe their strength of conviction to their noble pastor.

In this temperance work as in his preaching, and his attacks on evil of any sort John Chambers was as bold as a lion. He spent much time and travelled to many places in order to take part in temperance meetings and encourage the workers. In Neil Dow's reminiscences, page 416, is an account of a great temperance meeting in New York on February 19th, 1852, at which the Philadelphia pastor was present. Dr. Crowell tells of another held at Chester, Pa. Dr. A. A. Willetts and Dr. Theodore Cuyler were often with the "War Horse" in his campaigns.

On one occasion when a barkeeper repeatedly sold liquor to one who was near and dear to the pastor and already a victim to physical decay and disease, induced by his drinking habits, Mr. Chambers went into the saloon, stated the exact case to the barkeeper and warned him not to sell any more liquor to the patient. Escaping from his nurse, the wretched man entered the saloon, again procured liquor and became decidedly worse. Finding what had been done, Mr. Chambers went to the barkeeper in fiery anger and said: "Didn't I warn you not to sell liquor to ———?" Then seizing him by his shoulders, he gave the publican a vigorous shaking, and again warned him, threatening a severe penalty. The barkeeper was so mightily impressed, that he is said to have sold no more to the patient.

During all these early years, Mr. Chambers kept his young men busy in active evangelical work, especially in the holding of neighborhood prayer meetings on what were then the outskirts of the city. In 1875, Rev. J. J. Baker, pastor of a Baptist Church at Navesink, N. J., testified at the jubilee meeting to the intense activity of the young men

of the church, with which he had united in 1829. Four whom he named, Summers, Burnham, Huntersen, and Town entered the ministry. He told of the zeal and activity of elders Hibbert and Arrison. "The young men of that time were interested in two prayer meetings, one held in the 'old frame,' as it was called—a barn down town, out of which effort grew 'The Cedar Street Presbyterian Church.' The other prayer meeting was held in 'The Girard School House,' out of which grew two churches, one Lutheran and one Baptist."

John Chambers was also a rigid Sabbatarian, and in this, it was not difficult to find an enthusiastic following, for many in his congregation, who remembered the strictness and severity of sabbath-keeping in the old countries, warmly seconded his efforts to train the young people after their ideas of how the Lord's day should be kept in America. Doubtless in the majority of the thousands of this Israel, the usual custom was to have baths, washings, the polishing of boots, and the preparation of outer clothing done on Saturday; but a still grander triumph was won by the new pastor and a precedent set for fifty years to come. Sunday funerals had been the rule, even to occasional disgusting excesses, both in prolonging the preservation by "icing" the corpse, and in the intemperate feasting and drinking after the return of the "mourners"—often a very mixed company.

John Chambers saw the folly and the wickedness of unnecessary Sunday funerals. He exposed their true inwardness and refused to attend them. This, of course, angered some of his people, and a few left the church. But how could they stay away? Out of love to Christ and for the good of the working man and of horses, John Chambers had acted. His motives were pure. He went after his offended breth-

ren and won them back. So the peacemaker, true child of God, led his flock—so well indeed that “his boys”, when pastors, had to do the same thing. They couldn’t help it. History repeated itself. It was first firmness in the pulpit, then offense, next fair scripture argument and personal appeal, followed by reconciliation, with the result that God and His Sabbath were honored. It was God’s pathetic appeal with Jonah over again—“and also much cattle.” Even a horse should rest on Sunday. The fullness of energy could thus be given to divine worship and to the complete enjoyment of a day, so different from all the other six days.

The Sabbath, as I remember it in church and home, was a rubric on our week’s page. The normal family in the Chambers church, of which ours was one, were all ready at home on Sunday morning so as to be punctual at church. After a good breakfast, including the traditional “Dutch cake and coffee” for the elders and grownups, and plenty of the same sweet and nourishing food, saving the Mocha, for the young folks, we started off from home so as to be at Sunday school a few minutes before nine o’clock. The session lasted until quarter past ten, which gave ample time for the breaking up and dismissing of the classes, the social greetings of friends, and a comfortable interval for getting into the larger auditorium above, where service began punctually at 10:30.

The Sunday school had been started as a novelty in the days of the old Thirteenth Street Church by the pastor shortly after his coming to Philadelphia. Although I do not remember that he ever taught a class himself, or ever heard of his doing so, yet there was one feature of his connection with and interest in the Sunday School which has been to me and to many an inspiration for life. Not long after the preliminary devotional exercises were over, our

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handsome leader, of stately port and mien, appeared on the scene. Going to each class he shook hands heartily with each and every teacher, and often saluted, or in some way noticed, the children of the class, speaking a pleasant word, or inquiring after sister or brother, parent or relative. Often to their delight he called the pupils by their first names, for he was able to do this. Both teachers and scholars would look for the appearing of this grand man as regularly as they awaited the sunlight. The pastor kept ever in vital touch with the Sunday School, generally remaining until near the time for his engagement upstairs. Thus he inaugurated a custom which was life-long and inspiring, and which many another active pastor has followed in true apostolical succession.

Would my readers wish to have a specimen of John Chambers's preaching even in his early days? To do this by presenting simply ink and paper is not to reveal "thoughts that breathe and words that burn". It is simply to point to a pressed flower, bleached of its tints and with all its perfume exhaled, for the sermon was the man himself. Nevertheless, a faded and time-stained pamphlet of fifteen pages, entitled "Sermon by the Rev. Mr. John Chambers, delivered at the Presbyterian Church in Thirteenth Street, Philadelphia, on the evening of December 2, 1827", when Universalism was then new and in the air, from these words, "Ye shall not surely die", gives some idea of the general style and quality of the young preacher. The discourse was "taken in shorthand by M. T. C. Gould, Stenographer".

Let us in imagination take our seat in the little brick church among his audience and listen to the discourse. Even the stenographer, owing to the crowd, was, as he says, in "a very unfavorable position for hearing." But who could not hear such a voice?

The sermon is a vigorous setting forth of religion in the genuine old-fashioned style, in a torrent of emotional and not particularly logical oratory. It is an assault upon the notions of those "who would persuade you that the idea of future punishment is only the visionary dream of fanatics". The especial reference is to "those emissaries who are so industriously engaged in seeking to destroy the souls of men: they are laboring by all the ingenuity of the arch fiend himself, who first presented the forbidden fruit under such bewitching charms".

The new pastor believes that this system "leads to the destruction of all morality and religion". By him the Eden narrative is read as a literal fact. The young orator quotes from Montesquieu, Lord Bolingbroke (though the reporter could not catch either the point or the words) and Hume, by which he would prove that "this system leads to the destruction of civil society and civil government". Warming to his theme, he declares that "all vice is the immediate offspring of the dogmas of Universalism The doctrine of universal salvation leads to all the vices and abominations under heaven". Reference is made to the fact that "New York tells a mournful tale in consequence of this doctrine"—the allusion being to a recent duel between a citizen of New York and a citizen of Philadelphia¹. The preacher even declares that "a man holding such sentiments should never be entrusted with any civil office".

Against the background of "fire and brimstone and an horrible tempest upon the wicked and ungodly" he pressed the invitation to come to "the Redeeming Saviour, the

¹ Was this the duel of Midshipman Hunter and the brilliant young Philadelphia lawyer, Miller, the latter losing his life and the former becoming the famous "Alvarado" Hunter told of in the life of Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry, (Boston, 1887) p. 239?

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Divine Saviour, the Glorified Saviour”. The eloquent preacher closes his discourse, which is from beginning to end directed to the conscience, with a good, warm, direct appeal to his hearers for personal decision.

Enough of proof is here given that from the first, even to the last year, if not the latest moment of his life, John Chambers never lost sight of the needy, sinful, human soul, and that he always closed with a tender and affectionate personal appeal. Men might be as steel against his logic, but their hearts melted under his winning importunity.

One great landmark in John Chambers’s life was his visit to Europe in 1830. His excessive labors and long-continued use of his voice in public discourse compelled him to cease both preaching and pastoral work. As he said in 1875 :

“In the year 1830 I lost my voice so that I could not have been heard twenty paces from where I am now if you had given me the world. My physician ordered me away and I was gone fourteen months. When the announcement was made to my brethern that I had to go they instantly made arrangements. They put into my purse twenty-five hundred dollars, and into the hand of my dear friend and brother, Rev. Dr. Ludlow, the father of Judge Ludlow, one thousand dollars to preach on the Sabbath for one year, making thirty-five hundred dollars down at once. It was a noble and generous act on their part”.

Such generosity was as surprising to the young pastor as it was creditable to the people themselves. To see the great ocean and the Old World at a time of the fullness of his manly vigor and professional success, travelling in a first-class steamer, compelled contrast with his first crossing of the ocean as a helpless baby and with a father who was an exile and political refugee. In England he was so fortunate as to see the royal maiden who had just been in 1830 made

heiress presumptive to the Crown on the accession of William IV. Possibly it was at this time that he made the acquaintance of Richard Vaux, then secretary of the American legation, whom I remember well in his later life as a prominent Democratic politician and mayor of the city of Philadelphia. With his long, flowing, curled hair,—pronounced dress and astonishing necktie, Mr. Vaux was a picturesque figure in the Quaker City. He often boasted of having danced with the lady who became Queen Victoria, though this was before she assumed the crown on June 28th, 1838. While in Scotland Mr. Chambers visited the Free Mason's lodges and enjoyed the mysteries of the Scottish rite. In Ireland he visited his native place, Stewartstown, the house in which he was born, and the prison in which his father had been incarcerated and from which he escaped. He was absent in all fourteen months, and came back refreshed in body and enlarged in mind.

In physical righteousness John Chambers stood before his boys and young men as an inspiring exemplar. He neither "drank, chewed, smoked, or swore." For fifty years he put to confusion those who preached the necessity or justified the use of alcohol or tobacco. Over six feet high, in superb health and vigor, always invitingly clean in person, he reinforced every day the teaching of good fathers and mothers who strove to lead their sons to noble manhood.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MASTER OF HEARTS.

In John Chambers, sanctified common sense was combined with spiritual fervor. As a young pastor, he had right ideas about finance and the honest support of a church. Money was needed for the salaries and expenses of keeping the edifice comfortable and in repair. Before the first year had passed by, it was evident to the "Chamberites", that a new building would be necessary, even if the law suit had gone in their favor. The voices of the croakers and prophets of evil, at first loud and thunderous, had sunk to the "peep and mutter" stage and were rapidly approaching silence.

In a new field, larger financial resources would be necessary, but from the first, only manly, honorable, and truly scriptural methods of providing revenue were employed. Never in all the history of the First Independent Church was there a fair or supper to which admittance was charged. Those methods of raising money, too often associated with religious societies, to the scandal of faith, the equipment of the jester, and the furnishing of the ungodly with excuse for self-righteousness, were tabooed by Mr. Chambers. He believed both that the laborer was worthy of his hire, and that men ought to pay for their religious privileges. He was so successful in this policy that within six years, having paid all debts, his people in the spring of 1830 bought at Broad and George (now Sansom) streets, that lot of land for four hundred dollars, which afterwards was sold for over four hundred thousand dollars. The land and house of worship, the subsequent enlargement and repairs, as well as the running expenses of the church, so long as it

was independent, were paid for by subscriptions. "We have never in our lives," said John Chambers in 1875, "gone abroad for means to help us."

The region west of Broad street was then "out in the country". Green fields, or vacant lots, stretched to the Schuylkill River. At Broad and Market were the Water Works. When afterwards these were removed and the pumps and reservoir were established at Fairmount, four small parks, with their trees and green sward, made one of the city's breathing spaces. Even then Broad Street was considered the western boundary of the city of Philadelphia.

Bright and happy was that February morning of 1830 when the young pastor, with many of his flock around him, took his place on the green sward at Broad and Sansom streets. With his long hair brushed into lively motion by the matin breezes, he poured out a prayer to Heaven for the blessing of the triune God. "Like all Irishmen, John Chambers knew how to handle the spade", and handle it well he did on that day when he turned up the first spadeful of earth. After the diggers came the masons, who built honestly a solid foundation, and then the corner-stone laying in March, 1830, and finally the dedication in June, 1831. Dr. John Mason Duncan preached first in the new house in the morning and the sermon was royally long. One little boy, now an honored pastor of eighty, remembers that it ended at half-past one! Alas, that Saint Paul's faults, like that at Troas, should be more imitated by us preachers than his virtues! In the afternoon Rev. James Arbuckle preached. "The house was crowded to excess all day."

How one family, and indeed a group of families allied by blood or marriage, came to be life-long supporters of and worshippers in the First Independent Church, we must now tell. We shall speak of one member named Mary.

It was in 1832, the winter in which the famous English actress, Fannie Kemball, sister of Mrs. Sartoris (whose grandson, in our day, married Nellie, the daughter of General Grant) was starring in Philadelphia in the old Chestnut street theatre, on the South side of Philadelphia's most fashionable street, above Sixth. Mary had spent a winter of great gaiety, revelling in the joys of the dance, the theatre and every sort of worldly amusement—much to the grief of her mother, a woman of unaffected piety, who was praying that her daughter might look less at things perishing and more at the eternal.

Yet no message from the Unseen, sent through a human preacher, had yet reached the ears of Mary's inner being. It was while the anxious mother was most earnestly praying, that Mary was invited by a maiden friend, whom she had met at a picnic and with whom she had formed a warm friendship, to visit her and go to hear the new minister on Thirteenth street. Mary came, and saw, and heard, and was conquered. At the first sermon she hung spell-bound on the lips of the emotional and electrifying young orator, who during all his ministrations had also that peculiar unction, without which, preaching, however logical and learned, avails little.

On coming home, after the service in the new church on Broad street, Mary told her mother that she would never go to the theatre again ; she had heard the grandest speaker that she had ever looked upon in her life ; who outshone every actor she had ever seen, and whose message had more charms for her than the theatre itself. Soon after this Mr. Chambers with his wife made his first pastoral call at Mary's home.

About this time, late in the winter and toward the spring, there was a revivalist assisting Mr. Chambers, who to elo-

quence and magnetic power, added the power of the draughtsman. He was an artist in words and with the chalk also. He drew a cross on the blackboard, and without the element of color, but with the aid of music moved the emotions mightily. He called upon the congregation, led by sweet voices, to sing, "Alas ! And Did My Saviour Bleed". His appeals, tender and powerful, were responded to. Many were brought "under conviction" and declared themselves from that time followers of Jesus Christ. On the day that Mary united with the church, one hundred persons were received at the communion table and into membership.

This is one sample picture of many of dissolving views of souls in Mr. Chambers's ever enlarging congregation. His ministry was from the first one of direct appeal. It was emotional, the personal element being powerful always, but there was no leaving of the converts to themselves or to neglect. Behind and above the Celtic fire and enthusiasm of John Chambers, was the life of the Spirit moving them through him. The converts were looked after. They were personally warned, exhorted, instructed, and taught. During this first year, yes, during fifty years, John Chambers seemed an incarnation of Paul's scripture: "Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus". No extra or special meetings were held in these early years, and none that we can recall in the later days, but the regular services were steadily "the occasions of converting power."

I have intimated that the secret of the great preacher's power cannot be discovered by mere logical analysis. One might as well try to explain John Chambers's influence over human hearts and lives by his printed words alone or through mere description, as to attempt to show, by a simple knowledge of the properties of lead alone, the astounding

effects of a Krag army rifle. The venerable Dr. Henry Clay Trumbull, veteran editor of the *Sunday School Times*, writes under date of June 11, 1903 :

“ An orator's or a preacher's power sometimes depends largely on his intensity of utterance or of manner. He can actually throw himself into his hearers so that they will, for the time, think or feel as he does, even beyond the meaning of his words. Thus it was said of Whitefield as a preacher that he could move an audience to tears by saying the word ‘ Mesopotamia ’. One who has felt the power of some preachers can understand the force of that statement.

“ Rev. John Chambers was a man of power in this line beyond any other of the preachers I have heard in my more than seventy years. I sometimes came from Hartford to Philadelphia to hear him in his church on Broad street. His voice would ring out with such intensity, and his words would so thrill through every nerve of my being that it seemed to me that a more than human being was making an appeal. On more than one occasion I have taken out my pencil to note such an utterance which had seemed to be inspired, but there was actually nothing to write down. No period could give the ring or the thrill. It was simply George Whitefield saying ‘ Mesopotamia ’. It was an element of John Chambers's power. But I love to tell of that power ”.

The communion seasons were from the first occasions of the manifestation of spiritual power. Often the minister himself would be almost overcome by his own feelings, or, perhaps we should say, by the vividness of his vision of the crucified Lover of our souls. Often in such a case it was his habit, during a pause in the rush of feeling to sit down upon his chair, throw his head back and completely cover his face with his handkerchief, his hands resting upon the arms of

his chair until his tears and the storm of emotion had swept by. These over, he emerged as the embodiment of quiet grace, dignity, and calm strength, the master of the assembly.

After the darkening of his home through the removal from it by death of his wife, Mr. Chambers, left with two little children, found consolation in even profounder consecration to the work of leading souls into the Way. His own spiritual life was deepened and his sympathies with suffering humanity widened by his own sorrows. He had always a message for those, who like himself, knew the weight of known griefs or secretly borne crosses. In later years he was to lose his only son. My own recollections of the young physician, whom my pastor always so tenderly referred to as "my son Duncan", are of a handsome and promising man, whose life was all too short. I remember how keen and warm were the sympathies of great congregations, during the time when the father's heart was wrung with grief, as the telegrams and letters told of the ravages of disease and the approaching end.

The biographer never saw the first Mrs. Chambers, who is described by those who knew her as very lovely in person and manner, but her children and the other "partners in life"—his favorite phrase—are well remembered.

The second marriage of Mr. Chambers was on September 30th, 1834, to Martha, the widow of Silas E. Weir, a merchant of Philadelphia and the daughter of Alexander Henry, a merchant in Philadelphia, and aunt to Mayor Alexander Henry.

My impressions of Martha Chambers extend from the month of March, 1855, until a short time before her death, on Friday, March 16, 1860. I have dim remembrances of my being a very little boy, when an august lady, who wore

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her hair in bands low down on her cheeks, as the fashion then was, with a very sweet smile, spoke kindly to me in the Broad street Church. I recall how every Sunday morning and afternoon, the stately man of God with his "companion in life", a lady of equally imposing appearance with himself moved up the middle aisle and, if I am not mistaken, often arm in arm, until reaching the space opposite the pew. Then the pastor would with his left hand, open the door. After ceremoniously seeing his consort well inside, he would shut the pew door and then move briskly forward and up the pulpit steps to the sofa.

Thus happy in his home life, rich in sweet domestic influences having ever a true "help meet for him", John Chambers, during most of his mature life, was helped not only of God but by woman's finer strength. He was the master of hearts also in his home, having Browning's "two soul sides". Martha Chambers once told my mother that she envied even the washerwoman that washed her husband's clothes. In Philadelphia to-day there are many daughters and grand-daughters that do excellently, and they have "Martha Chambers" in their name.

Of each one of three noble specimens of womanhood, in their appropriate time and sphere, it could be said,

"Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land".

CHAPTER X.

BOYHOOD'S MEMORIES.

My earliest remembrances of the first church edifice on Broad street, except the grand pulpit and a general glory of galleries and chandeliers, are rather dim. The auditorium seemed to be a vast and awful place, where a little boy would not like to be left alone in the twilight or the darkness. Nevertheless all my daylight memories of it are of the most genial sort. The great middle aisle, so well fitted for a marriage or wedding parade, but which afterwards, when as a preacher, from the marble memorial pulpit, I looked down into its sheer length and emptiness, I considered as a tunnel of waste space, was carpeted red. The enamel-white pew-doors, with white porcelain number-plates, bright red pew facings and cushions, and the lines of black silk hats of the gentlemen, laid just outside the pew doors, made a morning picture in which color was not lacking. In the afternoons, the aisles, occupied by eager hearers, were crowded with settees and chairs, so the silk hats of pew owners had to be kept, literally, indoors. On week nights I was often a witness of the ceremonies, in which several of the twenty-five hundred or more couples which were yoked in wedlock by John Chambers during his pastorate, received the nuptial benediction, and the bride the pastor's kiss.

At the orient end of the aisle, before the enlargement of 1853, rose the great mahogany pulpit, which swelled out in its capacious center and then rounded out with a still more generous curve at either end, from which rose two short pillars, as imposing to my youthful mind as those of Hercules. I remember how much I wondered, my infantile

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intellect being confused, when my father pointed out the "pillars" on the Spanish silver dollars, that two things so different, coin marks and pulpit ornaments should be called by the same name. On the top of these pillars at first was a globe lamp filled with oil, though in the march of progress, wick and chimney gave way to gas burners. Even to this day, my mental associations of the "lamps", in the parable of the ten virgins, are those of my boyhood's days in Chambers Church. Great crimson velvet curtains hung from near the ceilings, and shining brass bands on the carpet of the pulpit stairs are also in my recollection.

My next impression of the dear old house of worship was in 1853, when not quite ten years old, and living on Girard avenue, in the northern part of the city, I was taken "down town" to the sacred edifice when it was undergoing a process of enlargement and change. The fashions of 1831 were to give way to those of 1853. There was another great curtain, this time not of velvet, but, if I remember right, of coarse canvas, which separated from, but also allowed a partial view into a space in which masons, plasterers and carpenters were at that time more familiar than were sitters and worshippers.

In the twenty-one years of its history, the large building erected in 1831 had become too strait. By resolution of the annual meeting in April, 1853, the old pulpit had been taken away, the eastern wall knocked out, and the whole edifice changed in appearance by making an oriental extension of fifteen feet, while in front, on Broad street, the portico, with its imposing platforms, pillars and pediment were added. During the interim, when homeless, the congregation worshipped in Concert Hall, on Chestnut street. When I saw again the old church home, simplicity had given away to luxury. It was like the exchange from Ben Franklin's

two-penny earthen porringer and pewter spoon for china and silver.

The enlargement at both ends gave fifty-four additional pews in the audience chamber and more abundant space in the new Sunday School room, which, though a basement, was well lighted through plenty of windows on three sides. There was also a large "infant school" room, or primary department, over which my mother presided for several years, besides the large committee room, afterwards used for meetings of the Session, and also as a Bible class conducted during many years by Mr. Rudolph S. Walton. These rooms fronted on Sansom Street. On the north side, lighted from the alley, *straatje*, or little street, as the Dutch would say, were the library rooms.

In a word, the building had been modernized, with improved furnaces and gas lighting apparatus, new carpets, new cushions and large galleries, etc., so that when again I saw the edifice some months later it seemed not only a new and more gorgeous house of worship, with the glory as of the second temple, but everything was so shining and and clean, that it struck me as being an unusual sin to do what the small boy is so tempted to do,—to scratch the varnish on the pew backs. It is true that the very brightness of that varnish challenged the average urchin to see if he had not about him a pin, or the nib of a broken steel pen, to make his initials visible, or possibly some music. No carpet, or terry, or pew cushions ever seen on earth before, as I imagined, could be of a richer red, and beside the white enamelled front of the pulpit platform, nothing ever appeared whiter or glossier. The pulpit itself was carved in foliations, all as glistening white as if, though in reality wood, it were polished marble. In later years this altar-like pulpit gave way to a square structure of more massive

dimensions, Doric in outline and simplicity, that extended across the whole space between the columns.

That end of the sacred edifice to which our eyes first turned and longest dwelt, seemed to have passed through a veritable transfiguration. My boyish fancy, struck by the biblical phrase, suggested its shining whiteness as having been blanched by "fuller's earth"—to me an entirely unknown and mystic substance. As for the red velvet, on which the big Bible lay open, nothing before or since seemed to have richer gloss or texture, or more strikingly huge tassels. Two fluted white marble Ionic columns rose from the pulpit floor space to the ceiling. Back against the wall, instead of the old sofa, ten or twelve feet long, of veneered mahogany, with cushions covered with horse hair cloth, was a modern and more jauntily carved article of half the old length and apparently less comfortable. But what has comfort to say, as against fashion? Hanging beside the sofa, against the wall, on a white porcelain knob, was the very large oval fan of crow feathers, which, while to the ungodly it represented a rather narrow handled ace of spades, was then the thoroughly orthodox ornament of a pulpit, with which the preacher was expected to cool his brow without chilling his zeal on hot days in summer. Indeed there were some very hot days, when, glued to the overheated cushion, the small boy envied "the freedom of irreligion of the flies." As to the physical activity of the pastor, while preaching it was very vigorous, but it was too graceful to approach closely the reputed ideal of Abraham Lincoln, who liked to have a parson discourse "as if he were fighting bees". Nevertheless the fan, at restful moments, when he was seated, came into requisition as often as did the historic white handkerchief in time of oratorical action.

To the right and left of the pulpit were two high windows, with panes of colored glass. Rather long and narrow, each

consisted of two upright sashes or divisions, like casements, which could be easily opened in summer for ventilation. So much color, even to frivolity in the eyes of some, looked positively gay and suggested modern luxury more than ancestral simplicity.

Above the level of the floor and middle aisle was a large platform two steps high and probably six or eight feet wide, on which was marshalled the range of chairs for the pastor and his elders, who had ample room on it, even with the communion table set about the middle of the stage. At either end of this platform was a line of pews, five or six in number, at right angles with the eastern wall and entered from the west. In later years, these gave way to a screen of white painted wood and ground glass, covering stairways into the lower room. As for the ceiling, it was truly imposing in its great central countersunk rotunda and depressed squares, which showed how grandly the architect had treated this portion of the edifice.

The cost of the improvements was nearly fifteen thousand dollars, but the number of pews became 242 and the capacity, including the galleries, had increased so as to seat fifteen hundred persons. Nevertheless, for many years, it was not uncommon, as I clearly remember, to pack together under the one roof twenty-five hundred auditors. This was done by sitting and standing, by stowing away the children upon laps and down on hassocks, filling the aisles with seats, having rows of human wall flowers blooming upright all along the gallery, aisles, passage ways, and steps, and by cramming the vestibule, which was often completely occupied by settees or with a standing crowd. Happily no fire broke out or panic ensued during these dangerous jams. After the benediction the trustees, church officers, and boys and men were only too glad to volunteer as ushers, sextons, or labor-

ers. "Amen, Jacob, carry out the benches", was less a jest than a reality which we boys liked. Give a boy some muscular as well as spiritual occupation and he can stand the long services.

The most impressive scenes in the regular church services were those of the last Sundays in March, June, September, and December, when the memorial supper of the Lord, as instituted by Him, was enjoyed. This celebration of Holy Communion was an intensely dramatic as well as a moving scene. Indeed, sometimes, on the highly wrought imagination, and under the melting appeals of the man who saw, felt, and lived the truth, it was powerfully remindful of the ultimate division between the sheep and the goats. All the lower part of the church was reserved for and occupied by the communicants. In addition, as I remember seeing more than once, the aisles were thronged even to the pulpit stairs. Of the thirteen hundred and more members the overwhelming majority was likely to be present at communion seasons. The gallery was reserved and usually filled, yes, often packed, with the "sinners", to whom, in the course of the services, with streaming eyes and imploring hands, John Chambers would make intensely personal and moving appeals, which, perhaps in hundreds of cases, wrought decision. To this day "the galleries" in any edifice have to me a suggestion of impenitence about them. Nevertheless how, and particularly why, as I read, the king was "held captive in the galleries" (Song vii., 5), was utterly beyond my boyish comprehension.

One of these seasons, which marked my own first participation in the sacrament, I well remember, being but fourteen years old, the number uniting at this time being about forty-four. We made two lines along the pew fronts on either side of the aisle.

Another famous occasion was that of June, 1858, in the time of the great revival which swept over the land, and especially Philadelphia. Of seventy new members added, twenty-seven were baptized by the pastor. Of the seventy, sixty-seven were received on first confession of faith after examination and three by letter.

A writer in the *Christian Observer* of Philadelphia describing the scene, remarks : "The pastor administered the ordinance of baptism. The charges he gave them severally, as he baptized them into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, were various, scriptural, appropriate—words of hallowed counsel, touching the great end of life—are never to be forgotten. As the seventy stood before that immense audience, professing their faith in Christ, their ever living, reigning Saviour, and as the pastor addressed them and the large assembly of communicants in words of life and truth, in which all seemed to feel a living interest, the scene was solemn, grand, and glorious. We were ready to exclaim : 'This is none other but the house of God and this is the gate of Heaven'. The distribution of the bread and the wine to the thousand or twelve hundred communicants occupied nearly an hour. The church was then briefly addressed by Dr. Converse and again by the pastor. All were reminded that as members of the church they were not their own ; they had been bought with a price ; redeemed not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ ''.

On his fiftieth anniversary, Dr. Chambers said : "The ordinance of the Lord's Supper has been administered every quarter of a year for the last fifty years, and there has been but one communion during the whole time when there were not additions, and that was one of the quarters when I was in Europe. We have never received at any single time

fewer than seven, and no more at one time than one hundred and twenty to the communion. I state these facts that you see how good God has been to us, and how great our debt is."

I am very frank to say that, as a small boy, the moment of dismissal from the church service, after three hours indoors, was a very happy one, and the event usually awaited with pleasure as the crowning circumstance of the function. Truth compels me to state that my facility and celerity in covering the distance along the north side aisle, between the pew door and the vestibule, was something that often amazed my elders. Our pew was third from the front, but I reached the doorway, not wholly out of breath, nor usually mixed up in the crowd. I always did have an admiration for Elijah who could outrun Ahab's chariot and horses. The truth also compels me to add that my idea of happiness, at 12 M., was to join that amazingly large "curb-stone committee" of boys and men, often three or four deep, which gathered on the edge of the pavement, among and in front of the "tree boxes"—for Broad Street was lined with trees, then—in order to see the thousand or more people come out of the vestibule and down two sets of steps to the pavement. This was the time when, in my eyes, young girls were the prettiest,—even more than they have ever been since, and nearly everything in the world was usually bright and glorious, even though I had many boyish sorrows unknown to the world. I must be self righteous to confess that often it chanced, that while I had been genuinely "at church" and inside of it, not a few of the "curbstone committee" were young men (with some older ones) who had not been in church at all, but had come to escort the pretty girls home, or to meet their friends; though of course the great majority around the "tree boxes" had been listeners, if not worshippers within.

Usually on the large stone platform, between the entrance door and the columns, the pleasant friendly interviews and final handshakes with pastor and parishioners and friends in general, took place.

It was about half past twelve when we arrived home, on Twentieth street four doors south of Chestnut. Father, mother and seven children, the normal family, and often with guests, enjoyed, after due thanks to God, the bountiful fare, and the one hour of the week when the head of the house was present at the mid-day meal. Then about 1:40 P. M., we were off again to Sunday School which opened at two o'clock, and which once a month took the form of a Temperance or a Missionary meeting. At times, besides the appropriate singing and special addresses, often from the Master's envoys abroad, but home on a furlough, we had the missionary news from all parts of the world read to us. I remember particularly the presence and words of two Christian Indians from Kansas. One speaker, among many, whom I well remember hearing, was Rev. Wilder, the founder of the Week of Prayer. Among other enterprises, in which my boyish energies were enlisted, was that of securing contributions in money for the equivalent of one or more bricks in the American Sunday School Union building on Chestnut Street. Another was the financing of two and a half shares in the missionary ship *Morning Star*. I remember how the pastor thrilled us with the news of the Reed treaty of 1858, saying "China is open to the gospel". The Yedo embassy of 1861, giving me my first sight of men from the Mikado's empire—and especially as I saw "Tommy" and others at short range on Chestnut street—powerfully impressed my imagination. I little knew at the time that I should be an educational pioneer in the then distant archipelago.¹

¹ See *The Mikado's Empire*, Townsend Harris, *Life of Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry*, *Japan in History, Folk-lore and Art*, *The Religions of Japan*, etc.

BOYHOOD'S MEMORIES

The afternoon Sunday School over, the preaching and worship in the auditorium above usually attracted a much larger crowd than in the morning. Often I have seen every available space in the aisles, stairways, vestibule and pulpit platform taken up.

The afternoon exit to the small boy was even more interesting than in the morning, for the pavement and "church parade" show was greater. Hence, also, for purposes other than of strict devotion the said small boy usually took his seat in the gallery, near the head of the stairs. The benediction over, he was promptly on the side walk to see the largest number of pretty girls, and other people more or less interesting.

At home, from half past five until seven o'clock was a happy time, sitting on father's knee, while he told us stories of his voyages to Manila or Africa, or Holland, or of his travels on different continents, and among many kinds of people. As we grew older the interesting library book, and the bright chat and pleasure round the supper table made the time fly until 7:10 or 7:15, when we started for the prayer meeting, which, year after year, was as I remember it, held in the lower room. It was attended by from four hundred to seven hundred people, frequently every seat being occupied, with settees down the aisles to hold those who could not get in the cushioned pews.

The old, long and imposing mahogany pulpit from the old church auditorium, but without its stairways, had been set into the lecture room of the new and enlarged building. While the leader of the prayer meeting occupied the space up and inside, Dr. Chambers sat below and in front on a large chair, immediately outside the pulpit, his head being just under the crimson velvet cushion on which the Bible rested. The front row of seats, as I remember, was usually

filled by a dozen or so, more or less, of devoted women, who probably, next after God and as His most trusted representative on earth, worshipped their pastor. To the left, or eastward on the first seat, sat Mr. Newland, the choir master, who started the tunes.

The storage battery of power was in the half dozen or so pews running north and south over in the northeast corner, at right angles to the general line of seats. Crowded with twenty to forty out of the nearly one hundred men in the church, young and old, who could and would take part in the prayer meeting, they formed a reserve force of which any pastor might be proud. Those not sitting in these special pews were usually ranged somewhere near that famous corner, though occasionally, for best effect, they chose seats more generally distributed throughout the audience. Men like Burtis, Steinmetz, Smith and Walton, as I remember, were always clear, strong, edifying, speaking out of fullness as well as conviction. Some of their prayers will never be forgotten. As the alabaster cruse of memory breaks from time to time into recollection, the sweet aroma fills all the house of the soul.

Among those in this citadel and stronghold of these delightful meetings who used most warmly to pray was an Irish brother, who once petitioned most fervently that upon the pastor might descend "the fullness of the godhead bodily". There were exaggerations in the old church, but they were usually on the right side.

Bliss, Wanamaker, Seldomridge and other young men, as I see them in my mind's eye, often sat on the western side.

Almost invariably in times of spiritual interest, which was, as it seems to me, pretty frequent, constant and general, and almost certainly so in the midwinter, the pastor, toward the end of the hour would retire into the committee

room—not then called “inquiry room”. Those who wished to meet him, or rather could not resist his appealing invitations, would rise from their places and reach their waiting and praying leader. This they did by passing westward, either through the southern or the northern door and rooms leading out from the prayer meeting room. After traversing some yards of a space, short and direct on the south side, longer and more diagonal on the north side, “the trembling sinner in whose breast a thousand thoughts revolve”, reached the friend of their souls. Sometimes, indeed, Mr. Chambers had no one to meet him, but usually there were from two to twenty persons with whom he had a word and perhaps a prayer. In that room hundreds of decisions were made which affected souls for eternity. I shall never forget my journey thither and the warm words that welcomed, warned, and secured decision. That night the hymn was “O, to grace how great a debtor”. Nor could I, even if I would, let slip into oblivion the meeting of the Session a few evenings later in the same room. The decision of the boy to “turn to the right and go straight ahead”, seemed too sudden for one elder, and he spoke against immediate reception and advised postponement. So quick a change from mischief to seriousness seemed suspicious, if not dangerous.

God bless Rudolph S. Walton, transparent in his honesty as Japanese crystal! How often we laughed over it afterwards—his brief mistrust of me—as “holding forth the word of life” we cheered each other on in the Christian Way.

Although the Sabbaths were thus filled up and strictly kept, no days seemed more sunny and joyous. The week-night services were the lecture on Wednesday evening and prayer meeting on Friday. Often the first service took the

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form of a big social Bible class, when in the Socratic way, by question and answer, we learned more of God and of His wonderful Word.

"All this work was made easy by the inspiration of our pastor No one could continue long a member of this church without finding something to do."

Nor was this all. Besides "the untiring industry, the earnest manner and the burning eloquence" of the pastor, he made us all as one family, by his own fine manners and his training of us in sociability. We had to be hospitable and act towards the unknown stranger, in each case, as if we might possibly entertain an angel unawares. I remember once seeing, about 1856, I think, a slender, bashful young man come to our Sunday School. He carried his lunch in his pocket, so as to attend both sessions, and church also, for between 12 and 2, there was not time to walk to and back from his home far distant in the south end of the city, somewhere near "the Neck." My mother spoke to him and invited him to our house to dinner. I learned to know well, to honor and to love the young man, looking up to him for inspiration and cheer. He became one of John Chambers's "three big W's." He is now one of Philadelphia's merchant princes, a maker of the new Quaker city, a tireless worker for God and man.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MASTER OF ASSEMBLIES.

Though active in the multifarious duties of the pastorate and along many lines of activity and reform in a large city, always foremost, both on the firing line, or in the charge, in that unending battle against evil, John Chambers made the pulpit his first thought. He did this in his own way and according to his own methods. He rarely if ever wrote out his sermons. After due preliminary study and renewing of his strength by waiting, in prayer, upon God, he entered the pulpit. He depended largely upon being in first class physical condition, upon the inspiration of the moment, gaining much by induction from his audience and the circumstances, while trusting heartily in the presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit, upon whom he continually waited.

John Chambers believed in thorough public announcement. A true herald, he first made sure of calling together the assembly. By this he sometimes set as much store, as he did upon the proclamation of the message itself. On himself he laid the responsibility of his hearers' attention. In the main, his preaching was of the character expressed by the New Testament Greek word *kerusso* (proclaim), as well as by the word *evangelizo*.

John Chambers was the first minister in Philadelphia to advertize the subjects of his sermons as well as the hour and place of their delivery. He thus initiated for their publishers a line of profitable revenue. In the *Public Ledger*, especially, one may, by looking over the files, see the range and timeliness of his discourses. The topics were "sensational", in the best meaning of that term.

Being himself "of infinite wit", the pastor had an eye and a feeling for the humor of some of the situations which he created by his pulpit advertising. As a matter of course and of human nature, around so superb a beacon, many bats and strange birds flitted. Parasites and hangers-on, as well as men and women who wished to exploit themselves financially and for their own glory, and rise into notoriety on his fame, sometimes pestered him. For example, on seeing in the Saturday morning's *Public Ledger*, that the theme of the popular preacher in the First Independent Church was to be "On the importance of a man's having his life insured", one youth resolved to make gain of godliness. Mr. Chambers, while in his study, a front room in his house at Twelfth and Girard streets, which opened into the hall near the front door, was surprised to have ushered in upon him a young man with a small arm load of insurance literature and advertisements. The visitor strove to prove that a certain insurance company of Philadelphia was the best in the world. Having expected to get Mr. Chambers to recommend from the pulpit this particular corporation, he went away sorrowful, for he had had great expectations. Nevertheless from the tact, worldly wisdom, persistence and importunity of even the average life insurance agent, what lazy Christian cannot learn-a lesson?

Mr. Chambers always knew of the great preachers, not only in Philadelphia, but in other cities. Although, very properly, he never recommended his members to attend on the ministry of others, he did warmly urge his nephew, Milner, when visiting Philadelphia, to go and hear Philips Brooks, and he himself went with him to listen to Dr. Talmage.

When the grand rector of Holy Trinity called on me in Boston, as he did more than once (for he, too, loved Japan),

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and saw hanging on the wall of my study a certain portrait of his Philadelphia neighbor and friend, he cried out : "What a Grand old Roman ! Did you know John Chambers ?" Then he burst forth into hearty panegyric of the old "war horse", and seemed delighted that I was one of his boys. Later on, when our people in the Shawmut Church helped a native missionary to Japan and several Japanese lads from the U. S. White Squadron, then in Boston harbor, were present, Dr. Philips Brooks spoke to my people.

After my address in the Chambers-Wylie Memorial Church on the "Historical Night", December 11, 1901, I gave my people in Ithaca an account of the great Philadelphia pastor. The brief notice of John Chambers in the *Cyclopedia of Temperance and Prohibition* (New York, 1890), is also from the biographer.

It is only fair history to set down that in sermon preparation the pastor and his pen were not always closely acquainted with each other. No two men were more different in this respect than Albert Barnes and John Chambers. Much as they loved and admired each other, their habits were very unlike. The former spent from five o'clock until nine every morning of his life in his study searching the oracles of God in languages old and new. It was his habit to throw down his pen in the middle of a sentence, or even a word, on the clock stroke. The popular preacher made light of spending too much time in the study and urged more personal work with men. More than once Mr. Chambers passed his joke with the scholar.

Yet to-day Albert Barnes is still teaching the Gospel through his commentaries, in many tongues and countries, almost "all nations", after having educated a whole generation of American ministers and Sunday School teachers.

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On the other hand John Chambers still preaches in the lives of his disciples, in the church edifices which they have reared, in the congregations they have gathered, and in ever expanding circles of unseen but potent influence.

As a boy, when Albert Barnes, aged and venerable, almost blind through his long-continued labors which had so tried his eyes, met me on the street and asked me some question as to the place and person of the funeral of a friend mutually dear, I remember with what reverence I looked up to the great scholar and the fearless champion of spiritual freedom. I realized even then the shade of difference in feeling from that which I nourished toward my grand pastor. Nevertheless, God needs both kinds of servants. The suggestions of Socrates, as to writing both on the skins of animals and on the tablets of the human heart, are in point here.

The comparison made between Albert Barnes and John Chambers is much like that in the modern story of "Verbeck of Japan" and of Samuel R. Brown, "A Maker of the New Orient", perhaps, also, as the parable of the leaven in each case.

These were the days of the infidel's Bible as well as the saints' Word of God, the era of King James's Version and of the old crude theories of verbal inspiration. It was on such theories and on such alone, that such unlearned men, meretricious platform speakers, and ephemeral secularists, as Joseph Barker, Robert Ingersoll, and Charles Bradlaugh could thrive. The climates, both of popular and orthodox theology and of infidelity, were somewhat different from the cosmic influences of to-day. The arguments of unfaith were, for the most part at least, the old common, shallow, and blatant ones. The theological parasites and bacilli were as harmful, and in God's providence as useful, then as

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now, but I think popular orthodoxy and the average pulpit furnished much of the food for the obnoxious microbes, and even made congenial "cultures" for the peculiar varieties existing then.

The unbeliever fed his mind and starved his soul on the arguments of Mr. Paine,—not the Thomas Paine of the American War of Independence, when he sounded the trumpet for freedom, but the Thomas Paine of the French Revolution, who, long after his stirring appeals to American patriotism, wrote the *Age of Reason*. In view of the fact that the little thoroughfare in old New York, named in his honor, Reason Street, has long since become corrupted into Raisin street, (wherein we read a parable) Mr. Paine's arguments seem jejune enough. For Paine the patriot and public servant, all Americans should have the highest respect. I remember that my English grand-father, Captain John L. Griffis, of the Mariner's Society of Philadelphia which usually met in historic Carpenters' Hall, received his certificate of membership from Thomas Paine, the secretary. He had then no taint of theological rancor associated with his name, which clericals, who are not necessarily better Christians than laymen, are too apt to shorten to "Tom".

There was a society of biblical critics and amateur theologians, commonly called infidels or even "atheists", who gathered under the name of the Sunday Institute. These worthies met together on the Lord's Day in a hall in Sixth street above Race, and frequently discussed the themes and sermons of Mr. Chambers, sometimes, as it seemed, in a blasphemous as well as irreverent style. Like Mr. Chambers, they advertised their subjects in the Public Ledger. I remember one of them, seeing I was a "Chamberite", pointed out to me the "discrepancies" of the Bible, such as apologists on the one hand were in those days continually

trying to "explain", while the sceptic on the other enlarged them under his microscope. This old scorner called my attention to the fact that "artillery" (I Samuel XX: 40) was mentioned in the Bible as belonging to those early days. Hence it could not be inspired of God! He prophesied that Christianity as a delusion would soon pass away, and he recommended me to read Volney's "Ruins". How tired such men must be waiting for the religion of Jesus to die! Alas, for them, the corpse always fails to be ready!

Many a time have I seen in the church gallery a Voltairean looking old gentleman, who took notes and seemed to be immensely tickled at some of the denunciations of himself and his fellows by the pulpit orator. Dr. Chambers was rather free in handling the English Philosopher, whom he usually spoke of as "Tom Paine" thereby making at least one boy determined that, if ever he became a minister, he would give, if possible, even the devil his due and speak of doubting Thomas with his full name.

The *Sunday Despatch* was the first newspaper in Philadelphia to practice seven days' journalism, thereby shocking the feelings of those who could conscientiously read a Monday morning paper printed during Sunday hours. Of course the preacher fulminated against this innovation. It is a curious commentary on the change in public sentiment and practice, that on the spot in which Sunday journalism was so often and perhaps righteously denounced, there is published the popular newspaper which knows no Sabbath in its issues.

The days either of the destructive higher criticism of consecrated critical scholarship had not yet come to this side of the Atlantic, nor had the grand work been done by Dr. Charles A. Briggs, the pioneer, and the host of consecrated biblical scholars after him, which has cut the ground from

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under the feet of Ingersollism. Practically unanimous in brushing away the cobwebs of scholasticism and tradition, these consecrated men have helped, by God's blessing, to make the Bible the Heavenly Father's book as fresh as if written yesterday. They have driven infidelity out of its old strongholds and compelled doubt and unbelief to find new excuses and fortifications.

In the wars of the Lord the pastor liked nothing better than opposition and obstacles, especially such as could be overcome by spiritual weapons. With the inheritance of his fighting ancestors he had the true Irishman's instinct for the martial fray ; only his inheritances were turned to a nobler use and grandly were they consecrated. His preaching was just of the sort to equip his average hearer against the insidious attacks of unbelief, the freezing effects of conventionalism, and the paralysis of sinful pleasure. Many a mighty blow was delivered against the literature that undermined faith and morals. I need not speak of the obscene books and papers which had not then met their Comstock. Against such soul-destroying devices and their makers, John Chambers was as an unchained lion.

I remember how Renan's *Life of Jesus* carried captive many a weak intellect. Though manifestly few men of discernment would be likely to misunderstand its animus, some were mistaken as to its true import. One lady who gave me a copy, said as she handed it to me, "Will, this is a beautiful life of Christ. I hope it will lead you to Jesus". I need hardly say that in my work of leading men to the Master and into truth, I have never recommended this shallow romance, medicated with a "religious" purpose, which turns historic reality into cunningly devised fables. Against such insidious trash, even under so grand a title, and the writings which were the vehicles

of sensuality more or less veiled, the great pastor guided his flock into purity and strength of life.

Perhaps the best idea of the general scope and tenor of the stated preaching of John Chambers in his prime, and the general method of his presentation of truth, may be gained by collating from the advertising columns of the *Public Ledger*, his announcements made on Saturdays, say, from April 3rd, 1858, until the breaking out of the Civil War. Only the afternoon subject was announced. The pastor's idea was that in the morning edification, thorough expository preaching and pastoral counsels to his own flock should be the rule, while the second service might serve for stimulus, appeal to the public conscience, and the discussion of a wider range of subjects. Usually the text was given with the topic.

Behold here a selection of topics from the *Ledger* announcements. I could greatly increase the list from my own diary, but a few will suffice as specimens :

Is the religious movement of the day, of God? Acts v. : 33, 34.

Two sermons were especially for the benefit of those likely to be influenced by the Sunday Institute :

1. Infidels. The malignant deception of infidels against Christianity.

2. Christianity. Opposition to Christianity has always been malignant and unreasonable. Matthew XXVII: 19, 20.

This was the year of the spiritual refreshing following, as great revivals in America generally do, a financial panic—that of 1857.

Revival. How God's people must work that the revival cease not.

Previous to the war, John Chambers was exceedingly popular with most of the public bodies of men, especially with the volunteer firemen.

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Sermon to firemen. By request of the Y. M. C. A. in National Hall, Sunday Evening, May 22nd.

Like all of God's true children in Christ Jesus, John Chambers longed for the unity of the church, and, as I think, did far more by his spirit and life for its accomplishment than most of those who talk much on this subject.

Query. Can the world be converted until the Church is united?

Three famous June sermons were on the Divinity of Christ.

A champion of lay preaching and evangelism, he treated the question: Is religious teaching to be confined to the ministry?

Are the objections made to persons letting their religious wants be publicly known Scriptural?

In 1859, beginning with October, we find the following:

By request, a sermon on II Peter: II, 20. Annihilation. The doctrine that gives great encouragement for the wicked to live in sin.

How the Apostolic Church lived and acted and the results which followed. Acts II, 41-47.

Prayer. Whom God will hear when they pray.

Why are men so bitterly opposed to the religion of the Bible?

Early in the year 1861, when the clouds of impending civil war were lowering to blackness, some of the sermon themes reveal the situation. One can easily "read between the lines".

Robbery. Will a man rob God?

Liberty of Speech.

Religion. The incompatibility between Religion as taught in the Bible and the lives of professed Christians.

Prejudice. The effects of prejudice on the interests of Christianity.

Civil War. Is there anything in the commission given by Christ to ministers that justifies them in encouraging civil war?

In March a notable course was given on the rearing of children.

The proper training of children.

How are children to be trained?

By whom and for what are children to be trained?

If children are properly trained will they depart therefrom when old?

How are the young men and lads who congregate about dram shops, street corners, engine houses, etc., etc., to be saved?

Not a little of his morning preaching was, as we have said, in the line of expository discourse. This, from a coldly critical point of view, could not be called scholarly, and was rather repetitious, but it was thoroughly practical and characteristic, and the love which the overwhelming majority of the people bore to their pastor made every word tell, so that defects were largely forgotten. He had certain pet words which he rather overworked, and, to say the least, some mannerisms. His method was to quote frequently from the scriptures, and, in his later days, with many a page turned down at the corners of the big pulpit Bible. We can see him yet, as with one hand on his eye glasses and nose near the page, he quickly found the various texts desired to support his arguments. Mr. Chambers, as Mr. Moody would put it, was a master of "the original English" of King James's Version of the Scriptures. Occasionally he slipped on a word, the double p's seeming especially to bother him at times. His particular *bête noire* was the tenet of the limited atonement, and if there was anything he loved to pound at, it was this. What he gloried in was the pro-

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claiming and strengthening, with proof texts, of the doctrine of the universal atonement, such as I John, ii., 2. In one instance, after the word "propitiation" had on his, for once recalcitrant tongue, reached no further than the first syllable, the full word came out as "appropriation", which was not so far from the idea of the apostle after all.

He was especially impressive in the reading of hymns. and he was so, because as it seemed to us, he felt so deeply the sentiment expressed in the words. Memory will never allow us to forget his frequent rendering of "Oh to grace how great a debtor!" His favorite term for his Best Beloved was "Our Lord and Master," but whatever name he used, one always knew that our pastor was in close and daily touch with Him and that was the secret of his godly life and his power for good. Other hymns, "There is a holy city", "My days are gliding swiftly by" (to the tune "Shining Shore") and some that are rarely heard now, were also favorites. There is proof to the memory that "his-story is a resurrection."

John Chambers was not only a natural orator and master in the pulpit, but he also made an admirable presiding officer. This was not only on account of his superb and commanding figure, his leonine countenance and his eagle eye, but also because of his ability to understand an audience and take in all the possibilities. He knew just at what moment to test its powers. His glance seemed to be an individual recognition of every face. It was not until he was well into the fifties that he ever used spectacles or eye-glasses, and even when his brows were frosty he was able, by employing the best oculists and the right lenses, to see apparently everything and everybody in the house. Many a time he turned what threatened to be a total failure of a meeting into a brilliant success. By some witty re-

mark, a thrilling announcement, a touch of blarney—of which he was always easy master, or a dramatic action accompanying some winsome invitation, he made himself master of the assembly. By original and ingenious methods of silencing, shortening, or politely extinguishing bores, “platform burglars” or a long-winded or unskilful speaker, he saved the day, or rather the night. He was always the refresher of weary audiences.

I remember when a certain one of a delegation on some really worthy charitable enterprise, after addressing an audience not specially interested in the matter presented to them, made the remark (in conclusion) that “thus far what they had received had not paid their travelling expenses”. This roused the big heart of John Chambers, and when that was warmed Christians had to look out for their pocket-books. Striding forward from the sofa, he cried out: “Why, brethren, this will never do! Let the trustees come right up and empty out the baskets” [a collection had already been taken] “and go round again”. A burning plea of but two or three minutes for the cause followed from his lips. Then the previous contribution was tumbled out of the boxes on the carpet, and a new and magnificent offering was made, which happily proved a superb precedent, so that the delegation went back happy.

As to the personal appearance of the preacher, let us recall that in my childhood the stock and rolling collar were in fashion. The former made of black satin was stiffened and made to spring on the neck with wire. Some of the old leathern stocks were still visible among elderly men, many of whom still wore also the flap-front breeches and were unable to approve of the newer style. Usually this outer conservatism of dress, was the index of inner conservatism of opinions, theological or otherwise. Dr. Chambers made

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slight change in the cut of his clothes as he grew older, yet somehow seemed always, as to his outer garb, a man of his age. It was the era also of gold headed canes and of watch fob pockets in men's trousers, outside of which hung the watch chain or ribbon, with gold buckle or seal, which, by an Americanism, is called the fob itself. Most ministers, and among them Mr. Chambers, wore in the pulpit, a dress coat and a low cut vest showing considerable expanse of white shirt bosom, which then had pleats an inch or so in width. The watch and "fob" were taken out at the opening of the sermon, laid on the cushion and invariably put back just before the sermon ended, a sign which we small boys of course welcomed. As a rule, it was coarse manners to snap a hunting case watch in John Chambers's presence, for rarely did the pastor pass the bound of appointed time, for he believed that punctuality was righteousness. He kept within limits and his moderation was known to all men.

I do not remember that our pastor carried a gold headed cane, though I think he possessed one or two. His boots were always immaculate and shining. Standing up in black and white, a commanding figure, with ruddy, or rather roseate face, and stroking his hand through his magnificent hair, which in later years he wore behind his ears, the form and mien of John Chambers are imperishable pictures in memory. In hot weather it was his custom, on going home in the morning, to change his underclothing, from socks to collar, throughout. Though on oppressively hot days one might occasionally, after a service, see him with a wilted collar, yet year in and year out, the impression derived was of a physical personality as sweet as that attributed to Alexander the Great, whose close acquaintance with water, in its cuticular application, was held up to us youngsters as a delectable example.

CHAPTER XI.

TRUE YOKE-FELLOWS.

One secret of the success of John Chambers lay in the power which he had under God of attracting good men, capable and faithful men as helpers, and inspiring them with loyalty to himself. They followed him as he followed Christ. Though independent in action, his was the coöperative type of mind which was grandly shown in the continuous and faithful toil necessary for the growth and life of a church.

The government of the First Independent Church was Presbyterian in cast and form. Indeed it is very doubtful whether a Congregational Church, strictly so called, could have been carried on by the people of such intensely Presbyterian training and inheritance as most of his people were. The congregation held a business meeting once a year and the trustees, elected by the pew holders, took charge of the property, the edifice, and the finances. The elders were elected for life by the vote of the membership. There were no deacons. "All the elders added to the eldership since 1825 have been active praying men" said our pastor, in 1875.

Of the first elders I have no remembrance, though I think Matthew Arrison and Thomas Hibbert, ordained to the eldership in 1827, were, though aged men, in active service when I was a little child. I have dim remembrances of these two veterans, and certainly from very early days their names in our home were household words, so that I associate them with the aroma of things happy and lovely. At the name of Robert Buist, a dignified looking gentleman as I remember him, and who married the sister of Mr. Cham-

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bers, there rise up visions of seeds, bulbs, flowers, and gardens, for he kept, on Chestnut, or Market Street, a seed warehouse ; and I am bound to say (for we tried them in our gardens), that his seeds would grow. In 1852, he removed from the city and resigned his eldership. In 1857, two years after I entered the Sunday School, the Session consisted of Robert Luther, Aaron H. Burtis, John Yard, Jr., Francis Newland, Daniel Steinmetz, and Rudolph S. Walton. After the death of Mr. Burtis, Joseph B. Sheppard was elected to fill his place. I remember the election, on Wednesday evening, December 19th, 1860, and that I voted for the successful candidate, who had been nominated by Mr. Chambers. After the resignation of four elders in 1861, Richard Smallbrook, Thomas P. Dill, Alexander Brown and Edward H. Lawyer filled the places left vacant. Of Messrs. Broome, Brown, and Smallbrook, I have no clear remembrance, being, after 1861, only a visitor, though a very interested one, at the old home church.

Robert Luther was for forty-three years elder. He was a mason and builder with both bricks and men. My mind's photograph of him shows a very portly man, weighty in both body and mind. My awe of his person was tempered by a knowledge of his perpetual kindness. As master-builder of the edifice on Broad Street, he "wrought with sad sincerity" equal to him who "groined the aisles of Christian Rome" and, like him, "builded better than he knew". His son, Rev. Robert Maurice Luther is the well known Baptist pastor, missionary to Burmah, and professor of theology. He is proud, like myself, to call himself an alumnus of the First Independent Church, and has cheered me in this work of portraying our under-shepherd who led us to the Bishop of our souls.

John Yard, Jr., was much smaller in figure and of quiet dignity. Joseph B. Sheppard, always very neatly dressed,

I associated with manly repose, fine language, and a most attractive store on Chestnut street, where beautiful lustrous Irish linens were sold. Somehow in my childish memories, there are blended with Mr. Sheppard's name and personality, memories of those elegant tea parties, made elegant, I mean, by the sparkling wit and grace of the guests who gathered in my father's home, and over which my mother presided with such ease. I can truly boast that our modest dwelling was often irradiated by those we were able to attract to it. At one of these occasions, on April 30, 1855, "The Young Ladies' Association" presented their "Directress", at the hands of the pastor, with a handsome copy of "The Republican Court"—a book which tells much of Philadelphia society in the days of President Washington, and of those men and women of national fame, whom not a few of the very elderly persons in our congregation remembered. As a little boy, I always enjoyed the permission accorded me of coming in, after the best part of the supper was over, and listening to the conversation of the gentlemen and ladies, who seemed to me like so many princes and princesses, and from whose intellectual conversation, I am sure I often profited.

My mother taught during many years, a large Bible class of young ladies, which met in the Sunday School room at the right of the pulpit, between that and the northwest door. It afterwards grew so large that teacher and pupils had to occupy a separate room. Looking along the perspective of years I can think of no faces more lovely or countenances more animated; no dresses prettier and no hats smarter than those of these young maidens of marriageable age or near it. To see them and their teacher when the pastor came around for his morning greeting and handshake with the "Directress" was a sight worthy of a painter.

I fear that my readers will charge me with putting undue emphasis upon the material loveliness of what I saw and felt, but then we were all taught by the grand man to be happy. He used to insist that God wanted us to enjoy everything, and for the good reason that He had made all things richly for us to enjoy. He believed in love and marriage, and in happiness as a thing to be pursued and cultivated. He taught also that the richest, deepest, most constant enjoyment was most certainly found in a holy Christian life, and that a fruitful human career redounded to God's glory. The blessings of the 128th Psalm were often insisted on. He said, when fifty years a pastor: "I have married 2,329 couples. I was not responsible for their future happiness, but I believe and trust that in the main they have all been happy. If they were not happy the fault is their own. There is no reason why men and women cannot be happy when they ought to be".

Concerning preëminence among the elders, I feel sure that none will charge me with partiality when I record my impressions that in physical presence, in dignity and polish of manner, and in spirituality, Aaron H. Burtis led them all. He seemed a veritable re-incarnation of George Washington, though possibly with more personal magnetism and easy familiarity than even the Father of his Country is credited with. In any company his was a marked form, while in the gatherings for social worship his words, whether addressed to the Heavenly Father in adoration or to the people in exhortation, or in opening the treasury of the Scriptures, which he knew so well how to do with point and grace, were always acceptable.

Francis Newland was long the Asaph of the house of God, and lover not only of music but of all good things, tolerant and charitable, patient with the silliness of the young,

a noble father and friend, a most winsome saint, having many lines of conviction diverging from those of the pastor, liberal in his thinking, yet ever loving and beloved by John Chambers. I may truly say that he gave out stimulating and purifying influences like a mountain. I saw him last on earth when in Boston he visited his daughter and the Shawmut Congregational Church, of which I was pastor. I remember that the sermon was on Elisha and the Shunammite woman's son. He was then nearly blind. Yet, very curiously, he had on his retina a single spot still sensitive, by which, holding the dial of his watch in a certain position, he could read the time of day. In the case of Messrs. Luther, Burtis, and Newland I felt that they were such good men largely because they had such good wives.

Of all the elders, Daniel Steinmetz seemed to me most steadily worth hearing in the prayer and missionary meeting. Steinmetz always had ideas. He was a Bible student and knew how to present a thought with admirable clearness and close practical adaptation to every day life. He was an intense, ardent patriot, and a useful man in both private and public life. He was one of that noble stock of cultured Pennsylvania Germans that has so enriched our national inheritance.

Rudolph Schiller Walton was for many years my Sunday School teacher to whom I owe a debt of gratitude, though when I grew up and could think for myself and read the Bible in the original tongues and draw upon the resources of scholarship, I frankly disagreed with him upon some questions of church policy and the attitude of Christians toward that critical scholarship which produced under Luther and Calvin one great Reformation, and is yet to produce, by God's blessing and purpose, a still greater one. Foreseeing easily in the early eighties what many Presbyterian

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laymen could not then see, that before many years the substance of the truth, as held in cumulative unanimity by scholars, would be accepted by the Presbyterian Church as it has been in these years 1902 and 1903, I could afford to wait until we should see eye to eye. I knew him first as a teacher of a large class of unusually wriggly and often badly behaved boys. They were such real boys that I, with a touch of Pharasaism, believed them to be much worse, in every way, than those who made up our class, which, for a time, was taught by Mr. Charles Painter, a bookbinder.

When Mr. Walton in 1860, took his class out of the main school room into the separate southwest corner room, I entered as one of his scholars.

In the afternoons we went through Old Testament history getting pretty well through the period covered by the Book of Kings and Chronicles. To this hour these parts of Holy Scripture are as vivid to me as Durer's pictures, because of Rudolph S. Walton's teaching. We studied the Bible itself, and not lesson helps. One reason to-day why there is such a gulf between the Sunday School and the pulpit, and why the average scholar and even teacher is so apt to be scared at the "higher criticism"—even if indeed he knows what it is—is because he is fed, not on the Divine Word itself, but on those dilutions of it, and those plates of hash called lesson helps. Instead of the pure milk and meat of the Gospel, even the teachers stuff themselves with pre-digested food and machine-prepared aliment of all sorts.

For years while Mr. Walton lived, I often dropped in at Wanamaker's Grand Depot at Thirteenth and Market (1876-1896), when in Philadelphia, and always enjoyed his pleasant welcome and a handshake. He sold hats for a living, but his calling was to serve Christ. If ever a man loved his fellow men and wanted to do them good, it was Rudolph S.

Walton. As a benefactor, dispenser of cheer and sunshine, helper of all good causes, and a citizen of renown, his name will live. He died in 1902, at the age of seventy-four, leaving his fortune to help his fellow men.

Mr. Thomas P. Dill was hard of hearing, but his spiritual hearing was like that of Samuel or Paul. He was very tender hearted, ever faithful and true, making every talent that he possessed, whether one or more, tell to the glory of his Master. He seemed never to weary in following me up, cheering and encouraging me, expressing his personal appreciation, and joining also with me in sounding the praises of "our pastor" and the dear old church. Whether I went to college at New Brunswick, or came back from Japan to live in New York, or preached the Gospel at Schenectady or in Boston, "Brother Dill", who was a commercial traveller, always sought me out to bring sunshine and delightful chatty news from the old bee-hive in Philadelphia.

Edward S. Lawyer was a man of God and the loving servant of his fellow church members, and I recall his sunshiny presence. He seemed always so buoyant in spirit, so young in his feelings, so active in his sympathies, that it was long before I could think of him as an "elder". Of him I have the pleasantest associations. Besides passing the money box in making the usual collections on Sundays, he was always active, nimble, and ready to help his pastor. As the years increased, he seemed to grow in divine grace and in all winning human graces.

Of John C. Hunter, modesty forbids me to speak at length, as he was my uncle, having married Miss Sarah Clark, who in the thirties had accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Chambers on their visit to Ohio, establishing a union Sunday School at Mount Pleasant, the first in the place. With his wife, Mr. Hunter became deeply interested in Chambers Church. A

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man of wealth and generous in his gifts, besides being very devout and of simple and unaffected piety, he was a valuable addition to the board of elders and among the trustees. The son of John C. Hunter, named after the senior elder, Aaron Burtis, entered the Episcopal ministry, and is now, as he has been for years, the efficient principal of St. Augustine's School, at Raleigh, N. C., the director and manager of this industrial and religious settlement which is doing so much to elevate the negroes.

Of Fred. J. Buck (one of that great family that came from Bucksport, Me., one of whom I knew as a professor of Sanscrit and another as the United States Minister to Japan) I have also pleasant recollections, as of a family physician, and of a friendship extending through many years, as well as of fraternal participation in the life of the church. He was a cultivated gentleman and an able physician, as well as helpful elder.

Of Robert H. Hinckley, Jr., who I believe at this writing is the only surviving presbyter of the college of elders, I have memories going back to the time when we were both boys in the Sunday School, where he was noted always for his punctuality, activity, and willingness to serve. Of the depth and tenacity of his friendships, of his varied abilities, of his untiring service as a practical worker in the Master's vineyard, of his wisdom in council, propriety forbids me to speak in other than very general terms. After a friendship of fifty years, we both agree, as fellow alumni of Chambers Church, in our high estimate of the great preacher.

Other remembered friends and brethren were Mr. Purdy, Mr. Biles, and others of whom I cannot say my recollection is very clear. Many excellent brethren have come and gone since the time of my active connection with the church, so I am unable to do them justice. Mr. and Mrs. Biles had a most interesting family of sons and daughters, who were

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ever faithful workers in the church. Most of them I had the honor of knowing, and one of them, Charles, was a warm friend. Their daughters still follow the Master in unwearying service. Another friend and man of force in the prayer-meeting was William Smith, whose sister is one of the good city missionaries of my native city. To this day, I remember many of his clear and earnest words.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary or jubilee of the pastor, in 1875, the two great white columns were festooned with greenery, and above the pulpit desk rose a great arch of flowers and foliage with potted plants at the base. Behind the open Bible was the pastor, the veteran and leader, his hair a veritable crown of glory as he stood under the arch, which was itself surmounted with a crown of fragrant flowers. On the platform sat in the historic chair, (which is still preserved in the Chambers-Wylie Memorial,) Francis Newland, the senior elder and on his right hand in order, seven of the church officers, and on his left the same number, making fifteen in all. The elders were Messrs. Newland, Hunter, Buck, Dill, Lawyer, and Hinckley. The trustees, (not naming those who were also elders) who served within my recollection were George I. Young, George F. Nagle, Charles Yard, John M. Snyder, Samuel Campbell, Harrison Purdy, James Evans, John T. Beatty, Henry Myers, Isaac Bruce, Joseph T. Biles, Charles D. Supplee, Eliashib Tracy, William S. Williams, Charles D. Marrott, Augustus Somers, George Allen, Edwin West, J. B. Johnson, Henry Leslie, etc.

In his semi-centennial anniversary sermon Dr. Chambers said "We have sent out from our church between thirty and forty young men who are in the ministry, two of whom are in the pulpit with me this morning. . . . A number of them have paid the debt of nature and gone home, after they renounced the cross to have a crown". It was during

this memorable week that under arch and crown of greenery and between wreathed columns, standing behind the pulpit, while his elders and trustees—a noble band of helpers—sat or stood on the platform beneath, that the last photograph of John Chambers was taken.

Happily for the present writer and for future historians the Session of the Church, through their committee, Francis Newland and Robert H. Hinckley, Jr., secured a record of the sermon and “Commemorative Services” and published a neat volume of one hundred and three pages, which issued from the *Inquirer* press and was presented to the pastor’s friends as a keepsake.

Dr. Chambers’ third wife Matilda, who survived him, was the widow of Dr. Stewart, and a daughter of Peter Ellmaker. She had been reared in the Episcopal Church. One of her sayings, told in confidence to a friend who has told it to me, was that she admired the ritual forms of “the church,” in which she had been reared, but had known many ecclesiastical dignitaries, who became smaller as she knew more of them as men. It came rather as a surprise to her that in a church where so little store was set on outward forms, human character tended to enlarge. As for her husband, his true greatness steadily grew upon her mind as well as affections. It was through her influence that the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on him by the Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia. For a number of years, the most attractive courses of sermons were those to medical students. Frequently as many as twelve hundred students, by actual count, were present on these occasions.

Yet no appraisal of the value of the services rendered by the comrades and helpers of “the pastor” could possibly be complete, without a warm, hearty and sincere tribute to the noble women of the First Independent and the Chambers

Presbyterian Church. It is for me to make reference only. Justice in detail I cannot do. Without their zeal, devotion and tireless consecration, there would have been no such church as that which became the mighty mother of many children in God. To-day the majority of them have "fallen asleep". A few still remain on earth with us, in vigor of body and mind, some with the white light of Heaven's morning on their hair. They are "only waiting" the call of Him who has "forgotten to forget" them, or their unselfish service of love. In His Name they toiled. In His Name they still serve by waiting. "Faint, yet pursuing", a handful even yet follow the Undiscouraged One, in active service for souls.

Of the old mother church it could ever be said :

"The Lord giveth the word.

The women that publish the tidings are a great host."

Does the reader complain that this chapter is already too long? Yet must I not omit the pastor's assistant "at the other end"—William Weaver. I cannot tell how long or in how many edifices, old or new, he served as sexton, but "I knew him well and every truant knew." He had stricter notions on the subject of behavior at any and all times than some of us boys had, and his discipline occasionally was according to seventeenth century spirit and methods. I cannot say that we boys made his life a burden or shortened it untimely, for he lived to a good old age. Honored be his name and green his memory, for he believed in plenty of light, fresh air, comfort, cleanliness and order—the primitive articles of a sexton's creed, and he honored his Master and the house of God by his faithfulness.¹

¹See a fuller and more detailed account in the chapter entitled "Some Sextons I Have Known" in the forthcoming volume, "Sunny Memories of Three Pastorates". Ithaca, 1903.

CHAPTER XII.

CHURCH LIFE. MINOR PERSONALITIES.

These were the days, also, "before the war", when expansion was the law of woman's apparel. The hoopskirt had reached its maximum of periphery. Many colors were mingled on the same dress. The ladies wore "shoot-the-moon" bonnets, with small sized flower gardens stuffed inside the brim, between face and frame, and the ribbons necessary for adornment and fastening ran into yard lengths. Besides ribbon on the top of the head gear, there must be great bows on either side of the chin. Many a time I remember seeing the choir singers untie their bonnet strings when they would praise God with the voice and understanding; or, to be more scientific, they unlatched the hook and eye, which really did the business of fastening, the bows being for ornament rather than utility, reminding one of Gothic architecture made of timber in lieu of stone. It was a grand thing, at least one boy thought, to go to a morning or noon wedding within a private house, where at 10 A.M. the windows were shut tight and the gas lighted. The girls were all in voluminous circles of flounced silks. Their bonnets spread out on the bed of the dressing room were veritable parterres, with ribbons half a foot wide and a yard long.

Inside the house of God the fripperies of fashion were as rampant then as now. In one stylish family, albeit, according to common rumor of humble origin, whose pew was near ours, but further to the east, there was the father, who was a dandy in his dress. He always sat during the sermon and those parts of the service not calling for a bowed head or the grasping of a hymn book, holding his ridiculous little cane, which had for its handle a lady's foot carved in ivory. Her toes were always in his mouth, and the diligence with which

he sucked that cane impressed a certain boy, who passes over further description, of oiled and perfumed ringlets, amazing necktie or diamond-studded cravat and other vanities of life. I never frankly accepted the statement of Ecclesiastes, until I saw this gentleman's cane and neck gear. It must be confessed that the amount of time sometimes spent by young men on their neckties, then often three or four inches wide and made to stick out so that the ends were continuous with the shoulders, is a secret not to be told to the present generation lest we corrupt the youth.

But the psychical moment to the small boy was when the very stylish daughter of the family aforesaid with her sub-lunar bonnet, her gorgeous mantilla, her mighty collar of lace and resplendent brooch sailed up the aisle, sending many a black silk hat spinning on its ricochetting way before her. When about two fathom's distance from the pew door, which stood at right angles to the long aisle, she would seize a handful of the various concentric steel circles of her dress, and slightly tilting the metal bands would sail into her pew with as little collision against the wooden sides as possible. Within a busy period, of possibly less than five minutes, she was able to accommodate her crinoline to the dimensions allowed and get her spirit in tune with the sacredness of the hour and place.

Nevertheless when in later days, sorrow came to that same daughter, now bereaved and fatherless, she rose by divine grace into a very transfiguration of character, through sisterly and filial devotion.

Life is too short to tell of all the oddities and curious situations into which the hoopskirt led its wearer, and one must read Edward Everett Hale's amusing story of "The Skeleton in the Closet", to see what dire mischief these inventions of the evil one were capable of wreaking, even when discarded. They did indeed seem to be indestructible.

What glistening starry eyes, what dewy and rosy cheeks, what lovely faces dwelt inside of those bonnets ! Even to-day in life's dusty pathway, sweet influences like the breath of a May morning come back with the happy memories of Sabbath days, that were as "the bridal of the earth and sky", with the trees in white blossoms standing as bridesmaids. In memory's glow the returning vision of youth make what the Deuteronomist calls "the days of heaven upon earth". It was in that wonderful training school on Broad street, that so many lovely maidens were taught how, by divine grace, to be noble wives and mothers, and useful women and workers for the coming of the kingdom of heaven, and from which so many alumni went forth, young men to preach the good news of God. On the missionary field, or at home, in bustling cities, or in quiet country charges, many there are who to-day amid monotony and toil, refresh their spirits at the fountains of memory, taking inspiration from the past and its great personality, thanking God and taking courage.

"The traveller owns the grateful sense
Of sweetness near, he knows not whence,
And pausing takes with forehead bare
The benediction of the air."

They were not all sunny days for "the pastor", but rather many a "dark and cloudy day", for not all of the seed of the sower fell into good and honest hearts. Too many trusted in themselves and falling, wallowed in the mire. One favorite text and a very sincere utterance of both the Christ's first John and one of his latest disciples so named, was this: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth". When, on the contrary, his quondam church members dishonored their Lord, then "the pastor's" heart was wrung—alas, too often—with anguish.

Among memory's dissolving views is one of a young man

who had been brought into the church and for a time gave promise of manly piety and a fruitful Christian career, but, falling into habits of worldly pleasure he seemed to lose in girth of soul as he became larger in body. He once boasted to me of his finely developed muscle, ascribing his physical enlargement and, as he thought, improvement to "good liquor and good women," saying it without a blush, and in such a statement horribly abusing the English language as I knew and felt it. When the war broke out he became captain in a regiment which was made up chiefly of Roman Catholic Irish soldiers from Philadelphia, men as devout in one way as they were reckless in another. In leading them to the charge in their first battle, he noticed not only how their faces turned pale as the spirit conquered the flesh, but also how each man crossed himself, and how, as he described it, the advance of his company into the thick of the fight could be traced by the packs of cards which they threw away. They did not wish to lose their lives, but they relished even less the idea of being found dead with these instruments of pleasure and of evil in their knapsacks. The handsome young captain, after going to moral wreck, was mortally wounded in battle. When his body was brought home and laid in Laurel Hill, I remember the impressive final words of his saddened and disappointed pastor as he committed "to the care of the Resurrection and the Life" the relics of a once noble form :

"Alas ! there are wrecks on humanity's sea
More awful than any on ocean can be".

Yet the preacher's burning denunciations of sin and his praise of holiness helped us all to keep step with the Infinite and hold to the right path. Whether in formal discourse or in the reading of a hymn he lost no opportunity to make sinners and false professors uncomfortable and to cheer well doers.

Rev. James Crowell, D.D., writes, in 1902 :

“ I remember going in to hear Rev. Dr. Chambers one Sabbath afternoon, and being much struck with a remark that he made while reading a hymn. It was characteristic of the plain, straightforward way in which he would sometimes rebuke what he thought was wrong among the people. He was reading the hymn

‘ My soul, be on thy guard
Ten thousand foes arise.’

and when he came to the last verse, beginning,

‘ Fight on, my soul, till death
Shall bring thee to thy God,’

he suddenly laid down the hymn-book and said, “ Bring whom ? Bring that cruel rum-seller, who sells damnation to his fellow men for the sake of paltry gain ? Bring that lazy lounging Christian who was at church this morning, but is now taking a nap in bed, at home, instead of being in the house of God ? No ! ”

“ Dr. Chambers was very active and prominent in connection with the Noon-day prayer meeting in the old Sansom Street Baptist Church, at the corner of Ninth and Sansom. He attended that meeting with undeviating punctuality, always insisted upon the exercises beginning exactly upon the hour, and upon a strict adherence to the rule which required prayers and remarks to be limited to three minutes. He was an inspiration in that meeting, and by his spirit and his eloquent voice added much to its enthusiasm and success.

“ I remember when I was a little boy attending school at the West Chester Academy, an announcement was made at one time that a great temperance meeting was to be held in Everhart’s Grove, a little piece of woods about half a mile

from the end of the town. The meeting was held on Saturday afternoon, and going down, with a few of my schoolmates to attend the meeting, upon reaching the outskirts of the town, when yet more than a quarter of a mile distant from the place of meeting in the woods, I heard Dr. Chambers' clarion voice most distinctly, as he was engaged in speaking.

"He was for many years a leader in aggressive movements in the temperance cause, and by his faithfulness in denouncing those who were engaged in the traffic he did much to promote the interests of that great reform. He was also exceedingly faithful as a pastor in looking after the absentees from worship. It was said that he could always mark those who were absent from the House of God on the Sabbath, and that his rule was on Monday to look them up and ascertain the reason of their absence. He was an earnest and faithful and aggressive worker in the cause of his Master, and by his eloquence and fervor succeeded in retaining his hold upon the large congregation that worshipped in the old church at the corner of Broad and Sansom streets".

I can add to Dr. Crowell's testimony my own as to Mr. Chambers's inspiring presence at the Union prayer meetings in the Sansom Street Baptist Church for I attended many of them. Once when the hymn "Oh for a thousand tongues to sing" had been finished he rose up and told us in a few burning words that we need not pray for "a thousand tongues", but that one tongue was enough, if each used his aright. His knowledge of the presence or absence of his parishoners was nearly infallible. Once when a very useful lady member had been absent during several weeks at "revival" meetings in another church, her pastor said to her of her absence: "It was like pouring melted lead down my back". Mr. Chambers did not believe in extra meetings, but in live ones all the time.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CIVIL WAR.

The great Civil War, which divided the nation and the states, families and households, struck the First Independent Church like a hurricane. In a sense, the Scripture was fulfilled as to the smiting of the shepherd and the scattering of the flock. The result was to be a distinct lessening of John Chambers's influence upon the city of Philadelphia, at least, and his relegation to a comparatively limited sphere of influence. One of his alumni writes: "If he had been in sympathy with the North in the Civil War, I believe he would have attained a national reputation. As events turned out, his Southern affiliations and sympathy displaced him somewhat from his niche of peculiar influence in Philadelphia, and relegated him to a work of lessening circumference". The biographer would gladly pass over the whole subject, but true history requires that a just statement of the facts should be given. Whatever be the judgment, all acknowledge that John Chambers acted with a good conscience. *Deo Vindice.*

Despite his passionate love of liberty and his democratic sympathies, he had imbibed in Baltimore and held in Pennsylvania the general ideas of the South concerning slavery. This "institution" was considered as orthodoxy itself. It was defended from the pulpit and set forth as divinely ordained. Mr. Chambers sincerely believed that the black man must ever be "a servant of servants unto his brethren". His passionate appeals to the supremacy of the Constitution as against the "higher law", and his hearty profession of admiration for the law-abiding citizen were all on the side of upholding and protecting slavery as an American "institu-

tion" to be sacredly safe-guarded. Just before the war, when calling at our home and finding the book "Uncle Tom's Cabin" lying upon the sofa and bearing evidences of being well perused, he condemned the reading of such a "vile" work in no measured terms.

By nature a sincere man of peace and in practical life a consummate peacemaker, our pastor professed great abhorrence of war. Nevertheless, these denunciations of slaughter and his oft-expressed horror of "brethren imbruing their hands in each other's blood", were discounted in the minds of those who knew his bitter denunciations of all things British and monarchial, and remembered his keen interest in the Mexican war. Some hostile critic of our national policy with Mexico, on seeing the Philadelphia recruits marching away to serve under General Scott, called them "dough faces". Mr. Chambers heard of this and, on the contrary, praising warmly the bold soldier boys of 1846, said that "if the body of the man who had called such soldiers 'dough faces' were made into bread, there wouldn't be a dog in Philadelphia that would eat a pound of it".

The slow coming events cast long and great shadows which rapidly shortened as the year 1861 drew near. The situation was critical and the political sky was fast gathering blackness. In politics John Chambers was a strong Democrat, sympathizing strongly with the president, James Buchanan, "Pennsylvania's favorite son", with whom he was personally acquainted, as well as with his niece, Harriet Lane, of whose decease I read in July, 1903. He spent several summers with the president at Bedford Springs, was often a guest at Wheatland, and at Washington was known at the White House, and once, at least, opened the House of Representatives with prayer.

It is certain that our pastor suffered greatly in his mind over the thought of a disruption of the Union. Thanksgiv-

ing day was the elect season at which preachers discussed political themes, and Dr. Chambers's sermon of November 24, 1859, was printed in a pamphlet.

I remember the occasion as if it were yesterday. His rendering of the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy was with such impressive power that to this day I feel as if no other chapter ought to be read on similar occasions. He also read the second chapter of First Timothy, after which he offered his fervent prayer. As I peruse again the printed discourse I can hear his ringing voice and see the superb and graceful gestures. This was his opening sentence :

"I have announced to you my purpose to relieve my heart of a burden that has long oppressed me. As an American citizen, an American minister of the Gospel, I love this Bible ; and the God of the Bible. My country, its constitution, and its laws, I love. As a man of peace I have a heart for the nation. . . . I love it as a unit. I am ready to live by it as a unit ; and am ready to put the blood of my heart fresh upon its altar rather than see it anything else than a unit". He then went on to dwell on the worth of the Union to ourselves and the world of mankind, and upon the jealousy which European nations, especially the monarchies, and more particularly England, had of us. Their hope of "triumphing over this Western continent was by triumphing over us".

He then dwelt upon the importance, solemnity and value of an oath, declaring that one of the most alarming signs of the times was the utter indifference to the value of an oath.

"Now, for example, the Constitution most positively and absolutely, in the plainest and most unmistakable manner provides that a fugitive from labor escaping from one state to another shall be delivered up. This is the Constitution. I am not to-day touching slavery right or wrong. I am

looking as a practical man at things as they are." Every citizen who winks at its evasion, "if he aids or abets the fugitive in his flight, he is before heaven a perjured man and the waters of the ocean could not wash out the stain",

The fugitive slave law had been often resisted in Philadelphia, as I remember well. In the same city, the first anti-slavery society had been formed, and within its present limits the first ecclesiastical protest ever raised against slavery was signed in the Mennonite meeting house in Germantown, where in summer I sometimes worshipped. The agitation of the abolitionists, and the burning down of Pennsylvania Hall were all matters of fresh memory to adult listeners in 1859.

"I now take up that question of questions—can this Union be perpetuated? I answer 'yes'. Take the Bible for our rule and guide. Let it be the sheet anchor of our hope. . . . No tempest that crowned heads or despotic sceptres can invoke will ever throw our ship upon the lee shore or put out the light of this American Union".

After a fling, by the way, at the divine right of kings, "a right which God gave in his wrath", he quoted the legend of Franklin's calling for prayer in the constitutional convention, noted the incident of Jesus and the tribute to Cæsar, and then dwelt on the necessity of the adopted citizen, especially, keeping his oath. He intimated that those immigrants who did not like our constitution "had better pack up and go home. . . . The constitution and laws of this country are our Cæsar and on us rests the solemn duty of obedience". He then passed to the duties of husbands and wives, of children to their parents, and to the duty of training the youth to speak with respect of rulers and laws. His final exhortation was to the sacred obligation to obey the constitution and the laws. He pointed out the danger

of the dissolution of the Union, showing that the peril was great "unless our pulpits cease their clamor against the constitution and the laws". Ministers must not urge "the higher law (as they call it) of instinct, but preach God's revealed word, and cease, too, from declaring from the altar that it is better to put into a man's hand a rifle, a death weapon, rather than a mother's Bible". He urged that we cease the agitation and abuse, that arrays state against state, and that sectionalism be abandoned. The conclusion was made with tremendous effect. "If I were on the banks of the Potomac, standing by that vault at Mount Vernon, I would say it over the sacred dust of the immortal Washington, the man that would labor or would wish for the dissolution of the American Union, let him be "anathema, maranatha".

But neither rhetoric, nor eloquence, nor professions of loyalty to the constitution could prevent secession, or that firing of the shot on Sumter which unified the North. The news of this overt act of hostility at once sharply divided the congregation, and a number of the very best men and women in the church, some of them Mr. Chambers's oldest and warmest supporters, withdrew into other churches, mostly Presbyterian, or united themselves with the Central Congregational Church, where they and their children and grandchildren form a notable element in that honored church. Others, like Anna Ross, the soldiers' friend, became actively identified with patriotic measures. The loss to the First Independent church was a rich gain to other churches. Four out of six of his elders, Daniel Steinmetz, Joseph B. Sheppard, Rudolph S. Walton, and John Yard, Jr., among his ablest laymen, withdrew into Presbyterian churches to help build them up with their talents, generosity, and consecration, or initiated new enterprises.

Others, though they did not take away their letters of membership, never again or rarely, worshipped in the church edifice. Probably the number thus lost to the congregation ran into the hundreds, but the break was because of conscience and conviction.

Nevertheless God was glorified and Christ honored even in farewells. The partings were in friendship. These were not personal quarrels, and the relations between man and man for Christ's sake were always maintained. John Chambers's own testimony on this point is clear. In 1875 he said "We did not dispute. They treated me and they have always treated me with the greatest respect and they were among our most useful men . . . and we have been on the terms of the most perfect friendship since . . . We did not have any trouble with each other—we parted in peace."

The most striking manifestation of the sentiment hostile to the pastor was shown by some of the trustees, yet in a way not approved of by the congregation. There was possibly some ground for the apprehension felt by the trustees, as one of them told me, that Southern sympathizers might get control of the property of the "copperhead church." Therefore, a flagstaff was erected on the roof and the stars and stripes were unfurled, and for some months waved in the breeze from morning till sunset. I was passing down Chestnut street that very morning, just as the flag was run up and a few gentlemen standing on the tin roof gave three cheers. It was a surprise and not wholly a pleasant one to me. This procedure hurt Mr. Chambers's feelings, but he said little about it. Not a few others, including the biographer, thought that peculiar kind of patriotism was, in its manifestation, entirely unwarranted. At the next election, the trustees most prominent in the flag pole business

were quietly dropped. The excitement about the "copper-head church" died away, and the pole was taken down and disposed of, the flag ever remaining in honor.

On the other hand Mr. Chambers did some things which his friends deemed highly unwise. On one occasion, it is said, he paraded publicly with the Keystone Club, a prominent political organization, which had been influential in the nomination of James Buchanan. None of the young men of his church who enlisted in the Union army received any encouragement from their pastor, who was never known in his public prayers to pray for the success of the national cause in arms, though always petitioning the throne of grace in behalf of the Union of the States. One after another and sometimes groups of young patriots together would put on the national uniform, shoulder their muskets and march off to battle, quite frequently never to return again. On one occasion, being called on for public prayer in the large Wednesday night meeting, though but eighteen years of age (Mr. Chambers always encouraged his young men to pray publicly) I petitioned the Father of us all, as was my daily custom privately, and as some of the others of us did occasionally in public, for the success of the Union arms in the field, and the defeat of the slave-holder's rebellion, and that "their covenant with death might be annulled and their agreement with hell not stand". I meant of course slavery and slavery only, but perhaps particular offence was taken by the pastor, because William Lloyd Garrison had in these words characterized the Constitution of the United States. Mr. Chambers was visibly displeased and afterwards referred to the prayer in terms of rebuke.

It was in the first year of the war, on Sunday, May 5, that either a company or a regiment, or portion of one—my diary says "part of the Scott Legion and the National

Guard " came to our church to worship before going to the front. I do not know just how or why the invitation was sent or accepted. Probably it was to draw out the exact sentiment of John Chambers. In any event the patriots ready to die for their country received no direct encouragement (except to maintain the constitution and laws of the country), but rather, as we all thought, discouragement, when the pastor told them he could not encourage them to go forth to shed their brother's blood.

When Robert Lee, with his Confederate veterans, invaded Pennsylvania, and was statesman as well as general enough to give battle on northern soil at Gettysburg, Philadelphia was in a white heat of excitement. Captain Griffiths, one of the handsomest men in the congregation, whose pew was directly in front of ours, received his death wound in this battle.

In June, 1863, I was in Baltimore visiting at my uncle's and trying to recuperate after an attack of chills and fever, resulting from spending a summer on the other side of the Delaware. (I am now thoroughly persuaded, by the way, of the efficiency of mosquitos as carriers of malarial poison). I had recovered, but on hearing that Lee's army had marched towards Pennsylvania, my native state, I immediately resolved to go home and enlist in the army. Riding into the city and through the barricades guarded by Union soldiers, I took the train for Philadelphia, reaching my house on late Saturday night. Early Monday morning I enlisted in Company H of the Merchants' Regiment, 44th Pennsylvania Militia. Within a day or two I received uniform and arms and was on my way to Camp Curtin at Harrisburg, ready to march to the fords of the Potomac. Before leaving I called to see my former minister, John Chambers, to tell him what I was about to do, hoping to receive

his blessing. As yet Vicksburg seemed impregnable, and apparently Lee was to march victoriously through Pennsylvania. Mr. Chambers argued against the possibility of putting down the rebellion, and descanted upon the impregnability of the terrific fortifications at Vicksburg, which were able, as he thought, to bid defiance to any force that could be brought against them.

Our interview was ended by the entrance of his friend the Rev. Dr. William Swan Plumer, a handsome man of magnificent bearing, whose white beard swept his breast and whom I had more than once heard preach. He was a voluminous and popular writer, who had held pastorates in Richmond, Baltimore, and Allegheney City, Pa. From the close of the war until 1880 he was professor in the theological seminary at Columbia, S. C. Before I had been a day in Camp Curtin at Harrisburg, Lee was driven back from Gettysburg, and our war-governor himself in the camp announced to us the fall of Vicksburg. Years afterward in Ithaca, I wrote ex-governor Curtin a sympathizing letter on the death of his daughter, Mrs. William H. Sage, of our little city. He replied in a long letter full of appreciation and memories of 1861-'65.

No memorial tablet was ever put up in the Chambers's church to the memory of the young men from the congregation who gave their lives to their country.

It is perhaps on the whole better to dwell lightly upon the record of John Chambers during the war, partly because it is a blessed thing to know how to forget. Even the battle-fields "nature has long since healed and reconciled to herself in the sweet oblivion of flowers". We have now a united country, the ulcer of slavery is a thing of long ago, and some things are seen more clearly. Possibly brethren of John Chambers who publicly refused to shake hands with him

have since been sorry. It is also quite certain that in the days of heat and bitterness, Mr. Chambers was held responsible for some things which members of his family, or relatives, said or did, and not himself. Afterwards, when charged with holding certain sentiments, or appealed to to vindicate his reputation, he refused, as he said "to hide himself behind a woman". He was too much of a man to say "women did it".

Mrs. Martha Chambers, his second wife, had died in March, 1860. During the war or most of it, he was a widower. Within this period, his daughter-in-law, a Virginia lady, the wife of Duncan Chambers, presided over his household. Our pastor's nephew, Duncan Chambers Milner (now pastor at Joliet, Ill.) a soldier in the Union army, was wounded, and spent some time during his convalescence in his uncle's home, afterwards entering upon the work of the United States Christian Commission. He bears witness how his uncle, with rock-like convictions, strove, in spite of the obloquy of enemies and the coldness of friends, to be patriot, pastor, and Christian, bearing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things, in a trying time, when political slander was busy, going on with his work as usual.

In all the separations and differences between the great pastor and some members of his flock, there was no personal bitterness or angry word. It was only on questions of national policy that they differed. Their brotherly regard remained the same, and God was glorified. This certainly was true. John Chambers, the hero quailed not before threats of being hanged at the lamp post. He went about his duties as usual. Like most men whose lives are threatened, our pastor died quietly in his bed.

Rev. Thomas DeWitt Talmage came to Philadelphia during the war, in 1862, and at once attracted much atten-

tion and great crowds to the church edifice on Seventh Street above Brown. I was one of the number who was drawn under his influence, and, from patriotic and personal reasons, I took my letter away from the First Independent Church to unite with the Second Reformed (Dutch) Church, of which Dr. Talmage was pastor. I met him in camp when he was a chaplain of the Coal Regiment, raised in Philadelphia during Lee's invasion. No one could ever doubt Talmage's loyalty to the Federal cause. In the darkest days of the war, when it seemed as though the slave owners' rebellion would succeed he uttered a fervent prayer for the Union, winding up with the petition, "Blast the Southern Confederacy". These were the days when on each Sunday, one went to the house of God, expecting to see a new widow in black and freshly made orphans in the congregation.

I saw Mr. Talmage first and heard him speak on the platform in Concert Hall, where also sat John Chambers. I remember how he sent some old ladies home to hunt for "the sixth chapter of the book of Nicodemus". Mr. Talmage quickly found out who were the popular preachers of Philadelphia—Phillips Brooks, Herrick Johnson, A. A. Willetts, John Chambers, and others. He was so struck with Dr. Chambers's position of influence that he made investigation into his methods and hired a man to look over the files of the *Public Ledger* to make a list of the subjects on which he had preached in previous years. All this was very interesting to Mr. Chambers when told him by his nephew, to whom the facts were communicated by Mr. Talmage himself.

Famous visitors to the church and preachers in the pulpit of the First Independent Church made variety. Some of these sermons heard I can never forget, such as that by the Rev. Dr. Schenck, who set forth the example of Caleb,

“faithful found among the faithless, faithful only he”. The Rev. Henry Grattan Guinness impressed me more with his fluency than his ideas. Dr. Daniel March, whose *Night Scenes of the Bible* I read with delight, and who replied so spiritedly to Hepworth Dixon’s foolish charges, I met again in Boston, after his tour around the world in the late eighties, and from him I have lately heard in praise of his old theological friend. Dr. Plumer gave us good biblical sermons. So did Dr. Leyburn. Dr. Neill, a Methodist, always pleased and fed us. Professor W. G. Fisher, ever popular, and author of many well-known tunes, was also frequently seen by us.

I have felt free to mention the faults, failings, and defects of the man we all loved so well, partly because he himself instilled early in us the love of absolute truth, and because his career is in itself a mighty lesson to all young men. It is a story that shows self conquest and mastery of difficulties, for John Chambers was ever rising on stepping stones of his dead self to higher things. Out of his own faults, by God’s grace, he made a ladder by which he mounted up to God. It is because his strength was made perfect in weakness that his life speaks even yet so powerfully. Though he has been dead much more than a quarter of a century, his influence is to-day like wave on wave of ever widening circles, and the force of his life is reproduced in scores of other human lives in all parts of the earth.

Even in intellectual edification he “builted better than he knew”. When the “higher criticism” came, with its imaginary terrors, as of hoof, horn, and teeth, I for one, felt able to tame, manage, and use it as a faithful beast of burden, both for the history of Japan and of Israel, largely because John Chambers used to say to me: “Will, study the Bible, and don’t be afraid of what you find there”. Where

some see only the chestnut burr, I have found food and sweetness. "Out of the eater has come forth meat, and out of the strong, sweetness," largely because of the atmosphere which John Chambers suffused around my youthful head.

Mr. Chambers's fortieth anniversary sermon on May 14, 1865, was published in a neat pamphlet, with a sketch of the history of the church. He was then in his sixty-eighth year and in vigorous health. About eight or ten of his original parishoners out of the seventy-one who, in April, 1825, had voted to call him to be their pastor, still survived. Despite the subtraction of removals, dismissals and deaths the church rolls showed an active membership of twelve hundred. The church edifice, on a lot seventy-six by one hundred feet, had cost, for building and enlargement, about fifty thousand dollars, all raised by direct subscription. About three thousand persons had been received into membership, nine-tenths on confession of faith. Other statistics are interesting—2,504 funerals, 6,247 sermons, 2,400 funeral addresses, 3,000 addresses on missionary, temperance and Sunday School subjects, and about 28,000 pastoral calls. In forty years, excepting his absence in Europe, he had been out of the pulpit for ill health only three times. In the fullness of strength and prosperity the spirit of this discourse is best set forth as he expressed it, "Oh, to grace how great a debtor" and "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us."

The salary of our pastor, at first very modest, had been increased to \$1,500, then to \$2,500, and for a few later years, he received \$4,000. It was about this time, 1865, that the gentlemen of the congregation presented him with a tea set of silver.

Almost as a matter of course, John Chambers was often approached by pastorless church committees seeking a popular and efficient leader; but never, for one moment, did he

encourage the thought of leaving his people for another field. Nevertheless the gossips sometimes imagined otherwise. Concerning one particular instance, which was the occasion of a witty and very remarkable sermon, my fellow-alumnus, Rev. Dr. Robert Maurice Luther, writes me, under date of July 16, 1903 :

“ As a preacher, Dr. Chambers was, by voice and personal presence most attractive. His voice was indescribably rich, full and sonorous. He was frequently charged with taking lessons from celebrated actors. This he indignantly and most emphatically denied, frequently in my hearing. On the other hand, I more than once heard an actor of some prominence, afterward a teacher of elocution, assert that he was in the habit of attending the First Independent Church, for the purpose of getting hints on the management of his voice, from Dr. Chambers’s method,

One sermon, much criticised, I remember distinctly, to-day. It must have been delivered about the year 1856. The occasion was a persistent report, widely circulated, that Dr. Chambers was about to accept a call to a more largely remunerated pastorate in Baltimore. The theme was “The Immortality of the Scandal Monger.” The text was, “It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it.” Neh., vi, 6. The pastor said that Gashmu had never been heard of before, and did not appear again, yet he was immortal.

I. How an unknown man may become immortal.

Does any one of you say that the work of the Lord offers no compensation in the way of personal fame? He is correct in the main. Do your work as faithfully as you may, and the probability is that you will die, and the world will give your memory not a second thought. Men will forget where you are buried. The newspapers will not stop their

presses long enough to record the fact of your death unless they are paid for it. Wicked men will say, There, we told you so ! That foolish fellow who made himself, and all good fellows miserable by his religion is dead at last. He caught a cold going to prayer-meeting, and he is gone, religion and all. The world will not greatly concern itself about you, or your memory. But just invent a new lie about one of God's saints. It may be as improbable as this one which Gashmu invented, that the Jews were about to rebel, and at once you take your position among the famous men. Your name will go down to posterity, as one whom the world will not willingly forget. Unborn generations will read your name, and believe the lie which you invented.

II. How should the Christian man meet scandal ?

In the way in which Nehemiah met it. He said nothing to refute the scandal. He kept right along, doing the work of the Lord. He knew that any attempt to answer the charge would only give advantage to the enemy. If a dog barks at you in the street, it is bad policy to turn round and bark back at him. The dog is always a better barker than you are. If you lower yourself to his level, you must not complain if he beats you at his own game. Keep on doing the Lord's work. They sent for Nehemiah to come down and have an interview with them at one of the villages of the plain of Ono, but he replied "O no ! I am doing a great work : I cannot come down." Imitate Nehemiah. You may not have the immortality of Gashmu, but that is an immortality of infamy. Better be remembered by God, than by His enemies.

The effect of this sermon was immense and immediate. The daily press took it up, and made frequent and pungent comments, but the sharp wit of the good preacher had forestalled all criticism.

There were many special sermons, about election time,

and in civil crises, which were equally bright and witty. It was not by these that the reputation of the good man was made, however. None who heard, can ever forget his sermons for the young. As a rather dull boy of nine, or ten, I listened as if he were talking directly to me. Hearing once a pretentious young man, criticising Dr. Chambers, and saying that he was not an intellectual preacher, my wonder was what "intellectual" meant: and I was greatly helped by my mother, who told me that the young man did not know enough to be able to understand our pastor. After all these years, I am inclined to think that my mother was entirely right. His sermons for the culture of the Christian Life, I have never heard equalled. He anticipated everything in this line which Drummond afterward wrote.

After fifty years, his form, his face, his voice, are all as vividly present as they were in my childhood, and I am sure that the spiritual lessons of his life, survive just as strongly in the hearts of hundreds of us boys of the old First Independent Church.

John Chambers was much more than a preacher. His pastoral work, and his intimate personal knowledge of each member of his large congregation, were as remarkable as his pulpit utterances. Thursday was his day for coming to our house, and it seems to me now, that he came every Thursday, but that is, of course, impossible. However, we children always expected to see him on Thursday, and usually at dinner. I well remember the homelike frankness with which he would express his appreciation of some of the dishes which my mother, who was a notable, and old-time housewife, would have prepared for him. I remember even more distinctly how it seemed to me that he knew everything that went on at our school and the events of our little cosmos. He seemed to be as much interested in them

as we boys were. He seemed to know everything that we did. The only time in my boyhood that I went to Welch's circus, down Walnut street, I became disgusted with some coarse jokes of the clown, and went out before the performance was over. I ran down the stairway from the dress circle, out of the door, and plump into the arms of Dr. Chambers! Did he scold me? Not much. He simply said in that voice of his, the tones of which were like an organ, "My boy! You in that place! Come now, you did not like it, did you? I should not think that you would care for such things. I should think your telescope would show you finer sights than anything you would see there."

How did he know that I had a telescope, and that I had made it myself, and that I used to be up on the roof of our old home all night, only creeping into bed just in time to avoid being caught? I never told him. I went no more to the circus.

In our church life it was the same. On the Sunday on which I united with the church, there were seventy-two who were received; yet this great man found time to say to the boy of fifteen, as we left the church, that he would expect me to take part, preferably by engaging in prayer, in the Sunday night prayer service, a fortnight from that day."

CHAPTER XV.

LIGHT AT EVENING TIME.

In the seven or eight decades of work for the Master by John Chambers and his alumni, besides those who have finished their work on earth and whose names I do not remember, not having known them, or known them but slightly, there are others, preachers of the Gospel, probably twenty or more, still in active career. It is interesting to look down the list of those who are, with the writer, fellow alumni of the First Independent Church, and to see also in what varied paths of service they follow the Master. In the list of eighteen Christian ministers known to the writer, six are Presbyterian, two are Methodists, three Baptists, two Congregationalists, and three Episcopal. The first of those attracted to the gospel ministry by the pastor was Thomas Irvine, who died about 1827 or 1828. The second was the Rev. Charles Brown, who united with the church October 1, 1826, and was ordained June 30, 1833. Thus began, in true apostolical succession, a line of prophets of the good word of God.

It was one of the unanswerable proofs of the genuineness of John Chambers's Christianity, that he taught the religion of Jesus as something more than a set of opinions, or even of convictions. He showed us all how to agree to disagree, to be friends, and keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace", even when we could not see eye to eye. He cared very little what denomination "his boys" entered as preachers of the Gospel. What he rejoiced in was their bearing witness to Christ. Intense as he was, in his ethical earnestness and in the reality of religion, tenacious of his own ideas as is ivy to the wall, he accorded the same liberty

of conscience and action to others that he allowed himself. In this, our leader was large minded as well as big hearted. I am inclined to think that his real generosity of mind and breadth of theological sympathy were greater than those of many laymen, whose mental view and habits have long been fixed. For an absolutely judicial opinion on this subject, I should trust the men in the pulpit rather than those in the pew. If this view seems a novelty, let us turn to the Rev. Dr. Edgar Levy, the venerable pastor of the Berean Baptist church of West Philadelphia. Now over four score, he united with the church about 1835. He said at the semi-centennial or jubilee of May, 1875 :

“Dr. Chambers has always been the counsellor and friend of young men. What pastor ever had the power of drawing around him, to the same extent, the young men of our city? Eternity alone will disclose the army of young men who have lighted their torches at this altar, and who have gone forth to enlighten and save a dying world.

“Many of these young men have entered other denominations ; but our pastor never seemed otherwise than glad that they had found fields of usefulness in other directions. His only concern seemed to be that they might be true men, useful men, faithful to God and to duty. And here, I cannot refrain from an allusion to my own change of church relations, as illustrative of his generosity. When I felt called upon to leave this home of my youth and unite with another people who bear a different name, I called on him to tell him of my purpose. And while he could not accept of my views, I shall never forget with what a largeness of heart he took my hand in both of his, and bade me go and preach the everlasting Gospel to perishing men.”

Our great teacher was a man of continuous spiritual growth, in his old age ripening in the wisdom that helped

and in the faith that makes faithful. Some things were seen by himself more clearly when God had given him the perspective of experience. This was so notable, that it excited the surprise of those who remembered only the former fiery days. He became less impetuous and abusive of his enemies. One alumnus writes, "A few years before his death, I asked him (Dr. Chambers) why he had fallen away from his strenuous and frequent utterances in behalf of total abstinence. He replied that experience had taught him that to make a man 'every whit whole' was almost as easy as to save him from a single evil habit, or to correct a single fault, and that he had come to feel that the utterance of a complete gospel was more necessary than preaching temperance. I think that this showed Mr. Chambers to be a less narrow-minded man than he had sometimes appeared to be".

His nephew writes: "After I graduated at college in 1866, I went to the Union Theological Seminary and visited him a number of times. I was not quite clear about entering the Presbyterian ministry. He urged me to do so and told me confidentially the plans to get his own church into the Presbytery before his death. When I asked him how he could advise me to subscribe to the Westminster Confession when he could not do it himself, he said: "My son, I can swallow some things now I could not forty years ago"! "

In a word, John Chambers saw as clearly as Whittier:

" The letter fails and systems fall,
And every symbol wanes;
The Spirit overbrooding all
Eternal Love remains."

With prophetic eye he perceived also that "the individualism of the middle of the nineteenth century" was soon to belong to the past, and that unity and coöperation were

to prevail over competition and independency. Yet to suppose John Chambers was ever a sectarian would be to misjudge him wholly. His very life breathed out the prayer :

“ O Lord and Master of us all !
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine.”

During the last decade of his life Dr. Chambers withdrew somewhat from public speaking outside of his own pulpit. About four years before his death came a stroke of paralysis which somewhat weakened him. His physician was the celebrated specialist and author who, like Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, has enriched both science and literature, Dr. S. Weir Mitchell. The patient was particularly touched by the tender solicitude of his Quaker friends, whose meeting house on Twelfth street was just across from his home. On recovery he sent out to his host of enquiring friends a circular containing his thanks in print as follows :

A CARD FROM THE REV. JOHN CHAMBERS.

“For many days my mind has been exercised how I could in the most Christian and modest way reach the eye and ear of a very large number of friends whose solicitude for my restoration to health and continued life has been so marked. I have concluded that a simple card, sent out through the press, from an honest heart, would be acceptable to all.

First, then, I owe a debt of undying gratitude to the Ministers of the Prince of Peace, who came like doves to the windows of my tabernacle with the inquiry late and early : ‘ How is he ; any change for the better ? ’

Again my gratitude is due to a large number of God's Israel, who called again and again without any other object

than to know whether the light was beginning to burn brighter in the house of sorrow. How Christian-like was this !

Then, again, I wish to acknowledge, as best I can, my debt of gratitude to that large class of my fellow-citizens, beginning with the learned jurist and reaching down to the humblest man of toil. In this enumeration I take more than ordinary pleasure in including a large number of the Society of Friends, especially the members of the Twelfth Street Meeting. While memory lasts those fond inquiries of old and young will not be forgotten. Kind words never die. As to my own beloved people I may say of them, as Jesus said of the faithful woman : ' They have done what they could '. There has been nothing left undone to relieve the anxiety of a pastor's heart.

The Press, too, has been most kind and generous, for which I thank them. Nor can I pass unnoticed the eminent services of my physician, S. Weir Mitchell, M.D., whose skill and devotion, under God, have brought me into a state of convalescence.

Glorious Christianity ! How unlike all other systems of religion.

JOHN CHAMBERS.

Philadelphia, March 28, 1871.

On reaching his seventy-sixth year, in 1874, the young people of the congregation planned a delightful surprise, of which he thus told, at the semi-centennial of his pastorate : " They converted these two figures ' 7—6 ' into gold dollars, and they presented me the ' 76 ' beautifully made up of gold dollars, containing one hundred and eleven in all."

" The glory of young men is their strength" and hope. It would hardly be fair to expect an old man of seventy-two, who had borne the heat and burden of the day, and was already broken in health and by many sorrows, to feel as

hopeful and buoyant concerning things at the end of the earth as a young man not yet thirty. Yet none more than himself felt humiliated and took rebukes gladly, when he realized that he had not honored his Master by as large a measure of faith as he ought to have done.

Late in 1870, just before leaving for Japan, to which country I had been invited by the lord of Echizen, to organize the education of the lads of his province according to Occidental principles and in modern methods,¹ I called on my old pastor to receive his blessing and take farewell. Always hearty in his welcome and kindly in his interest, I felt that his faith was not as strong concerning the educational and missionary conquest of the Far East, as his preaching and long-continued interest had led me to expect. As with the war for freedom and national life, so in the war for the Everlasting Kingdom, it seemed to me he took a too local view of a great subject. I was genuinely surprised that, instead of heartily cheering me, he seemed to discourage me. He spoke gloomily of the vast masses of untouched heathenism and said that anything I could do was only as a drop in the bucket.

Nevertheless, by the grace of God, I intended to make that drop tell, and I felt that what man could not do, God would. I entered the Japan, in which no native Christian dared then to make confession of his faith, in which no more converts to Reformed Christianity than could be enumerated on the fingers of one hand were known, and in which descendants of the Roman Catholics of the early seventeenth century were still in the crypts, undiscovered yet, even by the French missionaries then on the soil. At that time, 1870, feudalism with its mediæval ideals was the rule of society. A half dozen government schools on

¹ See Verbeck of Japan, Chapter XI.

Western principles, and only one or two of missionary origin, were in their infancy. I went out to live four years in the East, one of them as a lone exile in Fukui. This was the Japan which Verbeck, Brown, and Hepburn by Christian teaching and healing, which Satow, Aston, and Chamberlin through scholarship, and which Kido, Okubo, and Iwakura by political action were reconstructing, and where all the fascinations and horrors of the pagan world were rampant. No life insurance company in America would then insure my life, except at a heavy premium.

When I came back home in 1874, and in the still grandly attended Friday night meeting spoke to Dr. Chambers people, I told them of Christian churches with nearly a thousand members enrolled, of Christian schools and hospitals, and of a new Japan. I called the attention of the now venerable pastor to this fresh illustration of the truth he had so often proclaimed, how much greater God was than our feeble faith, and how superbly the kingdom of heaven was marching on. After the benediction, a hearty right hand shaken and left shoulder patted in the ancient style, with words of glowing friendship, made for my soul a picture set in diamonds of delight—the last of the great man that has framed itself in my memory.

CHAPTER XVI.

TRANSFER OF THE CHURCH TO THE PRESBYTERY.

For forty-eight years the congregation to which John Chambers ministered had formed an Independent Church. The time had now come when the same company of Christian believers, which had been the Ninth Presbyterian Church, was to enter upon the third stage of its history, and become the Chambers Presbyterian Church.

On the 9th of May, 1825, Mr. Chambers had received his call. Amid all vicissitudes, the removing to a new neighborhood, the building first, and then the enlarging, of the church edifice, the terrible storm of the Civil War, and the removal of a large number of his people elsewhere, nothing had seriously interfered with his work or threatened its stability or continuance, but in 1874 the pastor began to think seriously about the future of his flock. The whole trend of population in all three directions, north, south, and west was away from Broad and Sansom, while business was steadily encroaching upon the neighborhood once wholly occupied by homes. John Chambers had overstepped the limits of three score years and ten. A stroke of paralysis was nature's first warning that the best days of his strength were over. The time seemed now to have come when an independent church, of the type which had for nearly half a century demonstrated its power to live and grow, was no longer needed. It was not self conceit, but dire necessity that compelled John Chambers to reflect and to ask the question whether, after the removal of his own personality and the snapping by death of the ties which bound three generations to him in love and loyalty, the church could exist as an independent body. Long he pondered the matter. He

breathed his thoughts at first to no one, not even to his wife, but looked to God for light. He waited for the vision. While he was musing, the fire burned. He has himself told the story :

“ For a whole year I did not even say to the beloved companion of my bosom what my object was, what I was thinking about, but I was casting around to know what was to become of this house. I thought of that little house down at the eastern end of Girard street, where the venerable and godly Samuel Wylie, D.D., lived and preached Jesus Christ, and I remembered the degradation which afterward fell upon it. I remembered the beautiful church on Seventh street, below Arch, where our honored friend, Dr. Beadle, preached, and I remembered that it was converted into a place for negro minstrels. I recollected the house where my once remarkable and eloquent and noble friend, Thomas H. Stockton, preached Christ Jesus, and how it was desecrated from the service of Almighty God to the service of the devil, and I said one morning, as I sat upon the summit of a hill away off yonder in the state of New York, just as the sun was going down, and I looked out upon that beautiful country: ‘ God helping me, when I go home I will tell my brethren the conclusion I have reached after a whole year’s study and thought and prayer.’ That conclusion that I had come to was that we would go into the Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, we would change our charter, and we would put this church in such a chartered position that we should never lose it, but it should stand firm and fixed upon the immutable principles of the Lord God, firmly consecrated to the holiness of the atonement and the blood of the saints. We did it. We went into the Presbyterian Church. Those men of God threw their arms around us, almost with shouts of hallelujah, in the room just back of our house. The

Presbytery met us and welcomed us, and I had the satisfaction of seeing this church taken into fellowship with that denomination where they are to-day, and where I trust the church will ever abide and prosper under God's blessing. I say devoutly that we did not lose our membership by the change. I believe there were two communicants who took some offense. One of them, poor fellow, has gone to Heaven, I believe, but there were but those two who left us, and I am as certain as I can be that if that dear brother had lived, they would have, both husband and wife, been with us now''.

It is very certain that the step was a wise one. It is still more certain that had such a transfer taken place before, or during the war, there would have been a much larger procession of members into the Congregational Church, wherein scores of "Chamberites" could from the opening of the war be counted. Deeply indoctrinated in primitive and apostolic ideas, they who remained with the pastor until 1874 would, if the change had been made twenty years earlier, have gone like those who in 1861 went out from the First Independent Church, largely because of their ideas as to Union and secession, and entered the Central Congregational Church.

The Presbytery "dealt very leniently", as a Doctor of Divinity told me in 1903, "with the old 'War Horse'".

Dr. Herrick Johnson tells us that when, at the Presbytery's invitation, John Chambers gave his reminiscences of fifty years' service for God in Philadelphia, the address was a revelation and inspiration and a benediction. We insert here his letter to Dr. Chambers's nephew :

1070 North Halsted Street, }
CHICAGO, Jan. 1st, 1903. }

Dear Dr. Milner :

My personal knowledge of the Rev. John Chambers is limited to the later years of his life. During my Phila.

pastorate, he held a unique and conspicuous place in the city, as pastor of an independent Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian in its form of Government, yet independent of ecclesiastical authority.

He grew some great men in that period. He was the sturdy champion of some great causes. His intense and stalwart contention for civic and social righteousness could always be counted on. The rush and force and downright abandon with which he flung himself against every form of evil made him a leader of men and a winner of victories.

He was as bold as a lion, and had the heart of a child. His emotions were not born blind, and therefore, while intense, were under curb and bit. His preaching was often "the quiescence of turbulence". He himself might well be characterized "a phlegmatic fanatic". His talk before our ministers' meeting one day, after he had returned to the Presbyterian fold, and when he had been invited to give us some reminiscences of his fifty years service for God in Philadelphia, was a revelation, an inspiration and a benediction. We felt there was but one John Chambers, whom God had sent into this world, marked 'not transferable' and 'good for this trip only'.

HERRICK JOHNSON.

It was soon after this event, that he received the title of Doctor of Divinity, and henceforth we called him "Doctor Chambers".

A Congregational minister, one of the alumni of John Chambers Independent Church writes :

"I think he must have been pained when he turned his church over to the Presbyterians. Yet here was practical wisdom. At his death there was no longer room for an independent church in Philadelphia of the type of the church which he had founded. He did not lack practical wisdom."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL AND FAREWELL.

When, like Ruth leaving her native land to dwell with Naomi—mother in love, as well as in law—John Chambers plighted his troth to the church that became orphan for his sake ; he made Ruth's words his own, and in his heart said to his people : " The Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

For fifty years his one congregation was his first and only love. Deaf to all calls—and they were many—his one answer to his people was Ruth's to Naomi, and to those seeking him, the Shunammite's, " I dwell among mine own people." " How often have I heard him say," said Dr. Levy in 1875, " that though you could give him only a crust of bread and a cup of cold water, he would continue to be your pastor." Love begets love, and " unfailing confidence, tender sympathy and ardent love . . . made this union enduring and fruitful of everything sweet and precious'".

It was in the year 1875 that, after long preparation, the pastor's semi-centennial anniversary was celebrated. We here reproduce the programme as printed :

1825

COMMEMORATIVE SERVICES

1875

ON THE

SEMI-CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

OF PASTORATE OF

REV. JOHN CHAMBERS, D.D.

OVER ONE CONGREGATION

MAY 9TH TO 14TH, 1875

Sabbath Day, May 9th, 10½ A.M.—Anniversary Sermon—Rev. John Chambers, D.D.

JOHN CHAMBERS

Service 4 P.M., Sermon, Rev. T. J. Sheppard, D.D.

Service 7½ P.M., Sermon, Rev. Wm. Blackwood, D.D.

Monday Evening, May 10th, Services 7½.—Reminiscences of Early Days—Short addresses by Rev. Edgar Levy, D.D., Rev. Joseph Baker, Rev. John Bliss, Rev. Thomas J. Brown, and Rev. R. G. S. McNeille, who were formerly members of the church.

Tuesday Evening, May 11th, 1875.—Sabbath School Jubilee. Half past seven o'clock—Singing and Addresses. Half past eight o'clock—Refreshments for Scholars of Sabbath School.

Wednesday Evening, May 12th at 7 o'clock. Social Re-union with a Festival, for Members of the Church and Congregation, at Horticultural Hall.

Thursday Evening, May 13th, 7½ o'clock. General Praise and Thanksgiving meeting—participated in by Ministers of different denominations.

Friday Evening, May 14th, 8 o'clock. The Congregational Prayer Meeting, in the body of the church.

In a sermon marked by the usual graces of delivery, Dr. Chambers, as he was then, recounted in a touching manner the wonderful goodness of God enjoyed during a half century. He was surrounded by his church officers and congregation and his young alumni in the ministry. His old friend, Rev. Dr. T. J. Sheppard, with singular grace and power, preached from the fitting text: "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither". Monday evening was devoted to epistolary communications or addresses by pastors who had formerly been members of the church, such as the Rev. Charles Brown, Rev. Dr. Levy, Rev. Joseph J. Baker, Rev. William J. Paxson, Rev. John C. Bliss, Rev. S. P. Kelley, and Rev. R. G. S. McNeille. Tuesday evening was for the participation of the Sunday School children in the jubilee service. On Wednesday evening the social reunion at Horticultural Hall took place, when besides the singing, led by Prof. William G.

THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL AND FAREWELL

Fisher, and appropriate words from Rev. Dr. Eva and Rev. William R. Stockton, Francis Newland, the life-long friend and elder of the church, presented in the name of the people a golden tribute in the form of one thousand dollars. One of his young men, John Wanamaker, on the eve of his departure for Europe, had the day before sent his pastor a five hundred dollar bill on the United States Treasury. The audience, numbering a thousand, after promenading and shaking hands with their beloved minister, partook of refreshments, each lady receiving a handsome memorial bouquet. On Thursday evening there was another feast of reason and flow of soul in the greetings by pastors of neighboring churches. Rev. George Dana Boardman was in the chair, and Rev. Dr. Breed, Rev. Dr. Newton, Dr. Hatfield, and William R. Stockton showed by word and look their love and fellowship. Dr. Breed, in the course of his address, read the following original lines :

A stranger boy from Erin came—
He made our land his chosen home.
He heard the Master's gracious call,
He seized the banner, climbed the wall,
He blew the trumpet, drew the sword,
He fired the shot, he preached the word
By grace divine, thro' toils and tears,
With ardent hopes, defying fears,
In holy scorn of scoffs and jeers
He's held the fort for fifty years !
And if the God whom we adore,
But grant what thousand hearts implore,
He'll hold it yet for many more !

Amen and amen !

The time honored Friday evening prayer meeting was held this week on May 14 in the upper auditorium and Rev.

Dr. Plumer of Columbia, S. C., and Rev. Charles Brown of Philadelphia made addresses.

It was at the "golden jubilee", as we have shown, that Dr. Chambers having on other occasions recounted the gifts of his people to their pastor—the furnishing of his house, the table set of silver, the expense money for a trip to Europe, the carpeting of his house, study and parlors by the ladies, the young people's birthday offering of \$111 in gold pieces was treated to a fresh surprise, the "golden token"—one thousand dollars. In the grand old pastor's speech in response to his unexpected golden shower, he made it clear "what radiance it throws around this old man's evening of life".

Entering upon his seventy-eighth year, Dr. Chambers still kept up his abundant labors, though it was manifest, especially after the funerals of old and beloved parishoners and the great drain on his sympathies, that his powers were failing fast. In the month of August, 1875, he had an attack of paralysis of the bladder, which induced severe inflammation of the kidneys, resulting in blood poisoning, from which he died in his home, at Girard and Twelfth streets, after an illness of several weeks, at 11.15 P. M., September 22, 1875. It was on Communion Sunday, the last of the month, that asleep in God his mortal remains awaited their burial. His body was brought to the church, and thence from the spot where he had, a few weeks before, celebrated his golden anniversary. The last words uttered by him and set to music were sung by the quartet as the remains of John Chambers were taken from the church :

“ Farewell, farewell, farewell,
We meet no more on this side of Heaven.
Our parting scene is o’er,
Our last fond look is given.
Farewell, farewell, farewell.”

THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL AND FAREWELL

I have copied these words as kindly contributed by one of the original quartet, Mr. A. Gunning.

Dr. Chambers died September 22, 1875, four months after his fiftieth anniversary. His successors in the pastorate have been Rev. Henry C. Westwood, D.D., 1876-1878; Rev. J. M. B. Otts, D.D., 1879-'83; Rev. Thomas A. Hoyt, D.D., 1884-1902. On this very day, June 30, as I finish revision of the manuscript to hand to the printer, July 1st, 1903, I read of his decease yesterday.

The executor of the estate of John Chambers, Robert H. Hinckley, Jr., attended to the settlement of the earthly affairs of his teacher and friend, including the distribution among his grandchildren of the pieces in the set of silver presented by the congregation in 1865.

In the central part of Laurel Hill Cemetery, in a small lot just off the main driveway, with four granite posts to mark the corners, is the very modest monument made of three blocks of granite, set one upon another, the whole indicative of solidity, strength and symmetry. The top piece is uninscribed. On the center piece one reads :

REV. JOHN CHAMBERS

"FOR FIFTY YEARS PASTOR OF CHAMBERS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,
Dec. 19, 1797. Sept. 22nd, 1875."

(On the ground block is inscribed,)

"They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever."

(On the other side, on same block with the name is :)

"I am the resurrection and the life."

"MATILDA P. CHAMBERS

Wife of Rev. John Chambers

Died March 4, 1877."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CHILDREN OF THE MOTHER.

John Chambers used to boast of his three big W's—Walton, Wanamaker, and Whitaker. The two first-named are known to most of my readers. The third, who made a vow to give to the Lord all he had or made over the amount of sixty thousand dollars, was a generous helper of the pastor.

The first great offshoot from the mother church on Broad Street is the Bethany Presbyterian Church, in which Messrs. Wanamaker and Walton, were generously interested and unceasingly active.

In 1875 Mr. Chambers said, "Connected with our movements as a church, no single event in our history exceeds in point of grandeur or importance Bethany mission. . . , A very few, some thirty, of the young workers of our church headed by that remarkable young man, John Wanamaker, left us and after there being a selection made in the southwestern part of the city, they started a Sabbath School in the working room of a little Irish shoemaker, with some ten little ragged children to begin with, and in the course of a very few weeks they had to take all the room in the little Irishman's home, pretty much, and then they had not enough. A tent was erected that would contain some four or five hundred, and then the congregation agreed that there should be a house put up, and a one-story house was put up that would contain some five or six hundred".

It seems almost like a fairy tale when one contrasts the condition of things in the Bethany neighborhood, as I first saw it in 1855, and as it is now. After our family had moved from Girard Avenue to the house on 20th street four doors below Chestnut on the east side, my mother took me

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one day to enter the public school situated, I believe, at 22nd and Shippen. Just as we turned the corner at Twentieth and Pine Street, I looked across to the southwest. For many hundred of acres, there was an expanse of vacant lots occupied here and there with squatters' cabins, goose pastures and roaming cows, the streets not being yet "cut through". Still in the days of the volunteer fire company, with all its lawlessness and also of abundance, yes, superabundance, of liquor saloons, it seemed one of the least promising portions of the city. Now, it is densely built up with elegant homes and is the center of wealth, comfort, and culture.

I remember well, too, when the first band of workers went out from the mother church and on the 14th of February, 1858, in two second story rooms of the house at No. 2135 South Street, began a Sunday School, with twenty-seven scholars and two teachers, the seating capacity being eked out, if I remember rightly, with rough scantling brought up out of the cellar and laid upon bricks. Long before hot weather, the rooms, halls, and stairway were crowded, so on the 18th of July a tent was set up on the North side of South street. After a summer under canvas, the corner stone for a chapel was laid on the 18th of October, Dr. Chambers with his brethren, Leyburn, Brainerd, and McLeod making addresses. The chapel which measured 40 by 60 feet was dedicated on January 27th, 1859, and on January 4th, 1862, Rev. Augustus Blauvelt began his labors as city missionary, becoming after a year a missionary to China. I remember him as preaching a remarkable sermon on the kingdom of Satan. He died in April, 1900.

The growth of Bethany was continuous and surprising. I remember how those most interested conversed with each other about the name of the child now fully born and ready

for its clothing and christening. The walks and talks and experiences by the way, in going from the old home to the new enterprise, called up the words of the Scripture: "He led them out as far as Bethany and lifted up his hands and blessed them". So the name of Bethany was decided upon.

On September 25, 1865, the enterprise was organized into a Presbyterian Church under the care of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, Old School. The lot at the southeast corner of Twenty-second and Bainbridge streets, 112 by 138½ feet, was purchased, and on February 13, 1870, the new and commodious edifice was dedicated.

To-day, with its large eldership, boards of trustees and deacons, its doormen and tithemen, its leaders of Christian bands, its college established in 1881—the first of its kind in Philadelphia, and of which for many years its vice-president, Rudolph S. Walton, was chief friend and benefactor, Bethany is a center of blessing to thousands. Of the Deaconesses' Home, the Men's Friendly Inn, and other details of the great work we have not space to speak. At his decease in November, 1900, Mr. Walton left about \$200,000 for the erection of a new college building.

No sooner was Bethany Church grown to adult life than it began to send forth colonies. The Bethany Mission was its first namesake. By this time, in the twentieth century, the boy that I once knew as no richer or poorer than the average, had become one of Philadelphia's princely merchants, with hand ever open for gifts and help. A lot at the northeast corner of Twenty-eighth and Morris streets, measuring 114 by 136 feet, was secured. It was far away from any human dwelling, but it was in the direction of growth. The skilled fishers of men let down the net just where they knew the fishes would be in shoals—a method and policy following out that of their great teacher, Jesus

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Christ, and of their earthly exemplar, John Chambers. On this lot Mr. John Wanamaker and Mrs. Wanamaker (at whose wedding I remember being present, as a boy), in gratitude to God for the wonderful preservation from fire of the great Wanamaker store, have erected, since the streets were opened, a superb edifice with all modern equipments and furnishing. This, at the present time, serves as a church and Sunday School and for social gatherings. The main church edifice is to be erected later on the southern portion of the still unoccupied lot.

How gratifying this was to the Presbytery of Philadelphia is seen in the records given below. From the minutes of October 30, 1901, we make extracts of the

PROCEEDINGS OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERY OF PHILADELPHIA.

Mr. Robert H. Hinckley presented the following preamble and resolution :

“ As a member of the special committee who reported June 1, 1899 (see folio 228) on the proposed location of a church at 28th and Morris Streets, I desire to report that in accordance with the permission therein granted, Mr. John Wanamaker has erected and dedicated to the memory of the late Rev. John Chambers a church building on the North East corner of 28th and Morris Sts., which affords ample space for a congregation of fifteen hundred worshippers, also for a large Sabbath school and several large rooms suitable for reading rooms and for the general purposes of an institutional church. The ground and building cost Mr. Wanamaker over eighty thousand dollars, all of which has been paid and the building was dedicated during the third week of October, free of debt, as The John Chambers Memorial

Church. I suggest, therefore, that we recommend to Presbytery the following Resolution :

Resolved, That a special Committee of three members of this Presbytery be appointed to wait on Mr. John Wanamaker and extend to him the thanks and appreciation of the Presbytery for his princely liberality and his magnificent recognition of the work and services of one of our most devoted ministers who has long since been called to his reward”.

This was unanimously agreed to and the Committee appointed.

In the above record, the name of Robert H. Hinckley is that of the surviving elder of the Chambers Presbyterian Church and still an indefatigable worker in Christ's name. On Saturday afternoon early in May, 1901, in the presence of a large gathering of Bethany Church people and about five hundred children, ground was broken at Twenty-eighth and Morris streets. Besides addresses from John Wanamaker, Rev. Messrs. Wm. Patterson, John Thompson, George Van Deurs, and the laymen Edwin Adams, Robert Boyd, and R. M. Coyle, there were prayer and singing.

I visited this as yet unbuilt portion of the city on Friday, Jan. 23rd, 1903, which, besides being the 324th anniversary of the Union of Utrecht, our great national precedent for federal government and the date of the dinner of the Holland Society of Philadelphia, was for me a veritable John Chambers day.

Starting from Thirteenth and Filbert, the site of the old Church of the Vow, and moving through the City Hall buildings and Wanamaker's Grand Depot and big store, I came to Broad and Sansom, where in 1830, towards the setting sun, there were but unoccupied lots, or only a few scanty buildings. Further down Broad Street, near

Spruce, I passed, having already studied the interior of, the new and imposing structure, the Chambers-Wylie Memorial Church. Thence southwestwardly, I walked to Bethany Presbyterian Church which, when started, was amid brickyards, vacant lots, and with a great area of the open country stretching to the southwest. I then boarded a Gray's Ferry car and rode past the United States Arsenal and into a region where the streets had only very recently been cut through, and were but partially paved or curbed.

I found the Church of the Love of God, the John Chambers Memorial Church, standing alone in its glory. No human dwellings were nearer than a quarter of a mile, though houses of worship could be discerned rising out of the fringe of dwellings. But this pioneering, "preparing in the desert a highway for our God", was exactly what the First Independent Church people and the Bethany Mission colony of 1858, had done before. It was simply planting the standard for the hosts to follow. What grand faith to go ahead of population and to be literally a forerunner of the gospel! Outwardly the edifice, built of a combination of light brick, Scotch granite, and terra cotta, seemed but little "like a church", yet only, as it were, to impress upon the mind the absurdity of ever calling an edifice—a thing built by masons and carpenters—a "church", which is a company of human souls called to do God's will. Yet for such uses, and for such a company, and intended to be helpful to the education and training of the young in social holiness and for the worship of God, what could be better? In the basement was a gymnasium, with generous facilities for physical exercise, and that which is next to godliness. There were also a great entertainment room, a kitchen, tea room, and apartments for the janitor and his family. Upstairs, on the first or main floor was the great

Sunday School room proper, divisible, by movable partitions and curtains, into class rooms and able to hold in unity about twelve hundred people. Offices, reading rooms, places for mothers' meetings, and, oh blessed modern addition—fulfilling at least one pastor's dreams—rooms, where invalids or mothers with small children might come, see the minister but not be seen by the congregation, stay as long as they could and leave, whenever they wished, through a side door without disturbing any one. Kindergarten rooms and also those for the junior classes completed this "modern instance" of consecrated common sense expressed in a building.

After the courteous janitor had shown me about, I went up on the roof, whence projects many feet in the air a rotating star with electric lights showing at night, the red, white, and blue in alternation, while east and west along the ridge pole rises in large letters, electrically illuminated at night, the "Church of the Love of God"—though the corporate name of the completed enterprise is to be the John Chambers Memorial Church. On the roof also is a great bell cast at the McChane foundry, in Baltimore. This is the gift of Miss Kate Wentz, who, with her aunt Miss Cousty, were as I remember, among the most faithful worshippers during many years in the old church. Its silvery tones made the air quiver with melody first on Christmas Eve. Facing the south and the sunny hours is a superb stained-glass window, with the medallion portrait of the great pastor, as he looked in his prime, when his hair was just beginning to turn gray.

Thus, in a southwesterly line, through the city of Philadelphia, from near the spot where to-day stands the great Reading Terminal, has issued a chain of sweet influences, which, like those of the Pleiades, cannot be bound.

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The dedicatory services of the John Chambers Memorial Church, erected as a thanksgiving offering to the praise and glory of God, and in memory of the life and good works of his servant, the Rev. John Chambers, were held during the week beginning October 19, 1902, on entering the new house of the Lord. The published pamphlet, which is richly illustrated with portraits and pictures of the church edifices, is a valuable souvenir of both old times and new.

Yet this is not all. On June 9, 1898, some of the Christian workers of Bethany Church began services in a tent in West Philadelphia, near Baltimore avenue and Fiftieth street, and out of that beginning has grown Saint Paul's Presbyterian Church, which flourishes with high promise. Its edifice was dedicated March 24, 1901. Here again the great pastor is commemorated by a superb memorial window which sheathes the light and color that set forth most gloriously the Good Shepherd. It has been reared to the memory of John Chambers by Mrs. John Hunter, the widow of Mr. John C. Hunter, so long the faithful elder in the old Broad Street Church.

The basement of Saint Paul's Church, furnished and fitted up by the Brotherhood of Andrew and Philip, is named Walton Hall and contains a marble tablet in memory of Rudolph S. Walton, which reads as follows :

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF
RUDOLPH S. WALTON.

A wise counsellor. A loving friend. A just man.

Unto the life beyond—November 10th, 1900.

“ For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.”

—II TIMOTHY, i : 12.

Still further at Rutledge, Delaware county, Pa., is another Chambers Memorial Church, established and carried on chiefly by young men and women who are alumni of the First Independent Church and of the Chambers Presbyterian Church. It has been liberally assisted by the trustees of the Chambers-Wylie Church and contains stained glass memorial windows in honor of the pastor and also of the elders of the old Broad Street Church.

In the handsomely printed and illustrated pamphlet, entitled "Dedication Souvenir of the Chambers-Wylie Memorial Presbyterian Church", prepared by Rev. Thomas A. Hoyt, D.D., pastor emeritus, and published for the Building Committee in 1901, one will find much interesting information concerning the two churches merged into one and still occupying a home in the commodious edifice on Broad street, below Spruce.

After due conference the two congregations executed formal articles of agreement May 27, 1897, and their action was ratified by the Presbytery. For a short time they both become one, worshipped in the edifice of the Chambers Church, and when that was sold and torn down, the old Epiphany Church building at Fifteenth and Chestnut streets (wherein so long Dr. Richard Newton, a favorite writer of children's books, ministered), then owned by Mr. John Wanamaker, was made use of. From this temporary abiding place the united congregation moved into their new and splendid temple, enjoying the first dedicatory services on the Sabbath day, December 8, 1901, and continuing them during the five succeeding evenings.

The principal dates and items of financial interest are as follows: Of the sum of \$412,500 received from the sale of the property at Broad and Sansom Streets, the sum of \$200,000 was set aside as a perpetual endowment for the use



THE CHAMBERS-WYLIE MEMORIAL CHURCH.

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of the Chambers-Wylie Church, and \$60,000 were applied to extinguish the mortgage debt. The sum of \$6,000 was given to the Rutledge Presbyterian Church.

“On December 26th, 1899, the congregation instructed the Board of Trustees to proceed with the erection of a new church edifice, according to an estimate submitted by J. E. & A. L. Pennock, the cost of same to be \$101,000 and in April, 1900, the erection of the building was begun. On August 8th, 1900, the corner stone was laid and on the first Sunday of December, 1901, the Church building was formally dedicated, the Rev. Thomas A. Hoyt, D.D., preaching in the morning, and Rev. Henry C. Minton, D.D., in the evening.

The entire cost of the church building was \$103,915.66. The cost of Organ, \$10,000 ; Cost of Pews, \$3,260 ; Pulpit Furniture, \$600 ; Stained Glass, \$1,500 ; Heating System, \$2,400 ; Carpets, \$3,457.

Within two years after preaching the dedication sermon, the pastor emeritus fell asleep in God, and funeral services were held in the new edifice.

The Board of Trustees of the Chambers-Wylie Memorial Church met in the pastor's study, at noon on the same day, and passed the following resolution :

“The Rev. Thomas A. Hoyt, D.D., our Pastor Emeritus and for seventeen years our pastor, whose death occurred in Bryn Mawr on Monday, June 29th, was beloved by us all and by the church we represent. He came to us in 1883 and by his untiring devotion to the interests of this church and his skill in carrying into effect the union of the two churches now one in this present organization has made possible our present prosperity and position of influence.”

JOHN CHAMBERS

Now, during the pastorate of Rev. E. Trumbull Lee, with a few of the old "Chamberites" and many new followers of the Master the work goes on. God bless and prosper them one and all.

"Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake."

“ Clasp, Angel of the backward look
And folded wings of ashen gray,
And voice of echoes far away,
The brazen covers of thy book ;
The weird palimpsest old and vast,
Wherein thou hid'st the spectral past ;
Where, closely mingling, pale and glow
The characters of joy and woe ;
The monographs of outlived years,
Or smile-illumed or dim with tears,
Green hills of life that slope to death,
And haunts of home, whose vistaed trees
Shade off to mournful cypresses
With the white amaranths underneath.

Even while I look I can but heed
The restless sands' incessant fall,
Importunate hours that hours succeed,
Each clamorous with its own sharp need,
And duty keeping pace with all.

Shut down and clasp the heavy lids ;
I hear again the voice that bids
The dreamer leave his dream midway
For larger hopes and graver fears ;
Life greatens in these later years
The century's aloe flowers to-day ! ”

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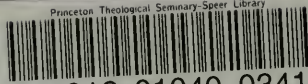
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